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# NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

## THE DIPLOMATIC SPY

Nick Carter reached out one hand and seized the Russian by the collar, pulling him tightly up against the iron pickets in such a way that he could not move.

NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

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# The Diplomatic Spy;

## OR,

## NICK CARTER AND "THE LEOPARD."

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A SECRET MISSION.

Joseph, the major domo of Nick Carter's household, ushered the stranger into the library, bowed to him, and said:

"Mr. Carter is engaged for the moment, sir, but he will be at liberty presently. I will tell him that you have arrived."

The stranger nodded his head and stood like a wooden image until Joseph had left the room. Then his tall and soldierly figure relapsed upon a chair, and he stared across the room at nothing during the entire interval of waiting.

Above stairs in the study when Joseph presented himself there, with the card of the stranger, Nick Carter received it, glanced at it, nodded to Joseph, who passed from the room again, then turned to Chick, who was near the window, and said:

"Go down to the library, Chick. Look the fellow over for me. Tell him that I'll be down presently. Then come back here and tell me what you think of him."

Chick left the study in obedience to this direction, and the moment he was gone the detective picked up an opened letter that was on the desk in front of him and read it once more, from beginning to end. It was typewritten, on a letter head of the Russian embassy, in Washington, and after the usual superscription, it said:

"I hope you will regard this letter in the light of a personal matter, not intended to be at all official in its character. When it is possible to enjoy a personal interview with you, I will explain fully that point, and all the others that are connected with this affair. I have not had the honor to make your acquaintance, but I need only say to you that it is a mutual friend of ours who has induced me to make a demand upon your services, and that I do so acting solely upon his advice.

"And of your services in a matter of extreme delicacy, I stand greatly in need, so I beg that you will come to Washington—since it is utterly impossible as well as impolitic for me to go to you—as soon as you can make it convenient to do so. The direct purpose of this letter is to prepare you for the reception of a gentleman of my staff whom I have sent to you with credentials, and who will explain, in part, the dilemma

in which I have unfortunately become involved. Please understand that I make no charge against the gentleman mentioned, but his position and his relations with me and with my household have been such that I would be glad if you take this opportunity of studying him somewhat.

"I have the honor to remain, my dear sir,

"Your most obedient and humble"—etc., etc., etc.

The letter was signed by the ambassador in person. It had arrived at Nick Carter's house during the afternoon of the preceding day. It was now approaching eleven o'clock in the forenoon of the first day in June.

Nick Carter, during his varied career, had had more or less experience with matters diplomatic, and was accustomed to the somewhat stilted phrases and mannerisms which all ambassadors and ministers regard it as necessary to employ; but it was unusual that an ambassador should so far commit himself as to make a covert charge against one of his own household.

For the detective could read the letter in no other way than that the gentleman—he had been so described—now waiting in the library to see him was under suspicion.

But suspicion of what?

Nick Carter had no idea as to that. Something had gone wrong with the Russian ambassador, which required the services of an expert investigator, and for some reason not given, it had not been deemed advisable to call in the services of the regular Secret Service of the United States Government.

Somebody as yet unknown to the detective, but doubtless a person high in authority in Washington, had recommended Nick Carter to the ambassador; hence the letter.

Chick returned while the detective was turning these things over in his mind, and he raised his eyes expectantly when his first assistant entered the room.

"There is nothing remarkable, or even interesting, about the chap that I can discover," said Chick, in reply to the interrogative glance. "He is just a plain, common type of the Russian army officer who has been appointed military attaché to this country through influence at court. He is less than thirty years old and more than six feet tall. I should say that he is not overburdened with brains.

"He belongs to the type that gets into no end of trouble through ignorance, stupidity, pride, arrogance, and all that sort of thing, but does not seem malicious at all. He is fair-headed, blue-eyed, rather good-looking—some women would call him handsome—and all in all, is rather a likable chap, I imagine. He ranks as colonel in the Russian army, and the card he sent up to you is not his own, which fact he took pains to explain the minute I entered the library where he is waiting."

"This card is not his own?" said Nick, picking it up and glancing at it again. He had barely noticed it when Joseph gave it to him.

"No. His name is——"

"Why did he send me a card not his own?"

"He said it was done by mistake, and that he did not discover it until Joseph had left the room to take it to you. I think he told the truth about that. He spoke as if it were the truth."

"Very likely. The name on this card means nothing at all to me—or to him probably. No name was mentioned in the letter from the ambassador. What is his name?"

"He is Colonel Alexis Turnieff."

"Turnieff? Turnieff? Now, where have I—— Oh! I know. I say, Chick, that is rather an odd circumstance. Turnieff, eh? And Alexis Turnieff, at that. You say he is not more than thirty years old?"

"Rather less than that, I should say."

"Humph! Oh, well, I don't suppose the name has any significance in this matter, but it is rather a strange coincidence, just the same, that it should recur just at this time."

"Then the name does mean something to you?" asked Chick.

"No; not really. It recalled the last trip I made to the other side, that is all."

"Do you mean when you went to Paris on the 'Bare-Faced Jimmy' matter?"

"Yes. I went there, as you know, to trace out the career of the woman whom Jimmy had married. You remember, Chick?"

"Perfectly. But you never said anything about any person by the name of Turnieff in connection with that matter."

"No; because there was no call to do so. But when I arrived there and had my first interview with the chief of the secret police of Paris, the name of Turnieff was mentioned by him to me. It was the name of one of the supposed victims—the first one that was known about, if I remember correctly—of Juno, otherwise 'The Leopard.' Later, when I read over the *dossier* of the Leopard, whom we knew as Juno, the full name was given. It was Prince Alexis Turnieff. He was a diplomatic agent sent to Paris by the Russian

government, and more than likely was the father of this chap downstairs; eh?"*

"Very likely; only this chap gave me no other title than that of colonel."

"It isn't likely that Juno has anything to do with this matter, is it?" Chick asked.

"No. It isn't likely, I suppose. But the affair is Russian. Anyway, I haven't the least notion what it is all about. The name struck me, that is all. Well, I will go down and see Colonel Turnieff. Wait here till I return."

The detective left the room and presently entered the library, where the Russian official rose from the chair to greet him.

"Prince Alexis Turnieff, I believe?" said the detective, as he advanced toward his caller. He made the remark quite naturally, putting it in the form of a question. He spoke as if he had always known the man, and had always been fully aware that he was a Russian prince.

Russian princes, be it known, are not necessarily allied to royalty. The title of prince there refers only to landed proprietorship. The sons of the royal families and its many branches are grand dukes, not princes.

But, nevertheless, this prince started and flushed deeply when the title was used so naturally. Then he drew himself up to his full height, and with a touch of haughtiness replied:

"Yes. I am Prince Alexis Turnieff; but I was not aware that I mentioned my title to the person who was just here with me, sir."

"The person to whom you refer, prince, was Mr. Chickering Carter, my first and chief assistant. He is not a servant, as your words might imply was your belief."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Carter. I had no intention to give offense."

"None is taken, prince. None at all."

"Would you do me the favor, Mr. Carter, to call me colonel instead of prince?" the Russian asked, while another flush rose to his cheeks and forehead.

"Certainly, sir; the more readily, because in this country there are no hereditary titles."

"Will you tell me, please, how you knew me to be Prince Alexis Turnieff?"

"Certainly." This was precisely the point at which the detective had wished to arrive. "My assistant informed me that you sent up the wrong card by mistake. Also that your name is Alexis Turnieff, and that you are a colonel in the Russian army. Just now, I assume you to be in the diplomatic service attached to the Russian embassy. That is correct, is it not?"

"Quite so."

"Very well; I am more or less familiar with many Russian names and titles. Not so very long ago I knew of a gentleman by your name, who was also a prince. He would be old enough to be your father, if he were living. I assumed that he was your father, and being aware that he is dead, I also assumed that you had succeeded to his title. So"—with a smile—"you will observe that it was not strange that I should make use of the title in addressing you."

"I quite understand. Thank you."

"And now, colonel, if you are ready we will come to the business of your call upon me," said the detective.

"At once. Yes, sir. You have doubtless been informed that I am here at the request of the ambassador for the czar, but that my errand is unofficial, and——"

"Pardon me, colonel; my information is solely to the effect that a gentleman from the Russian embassy would call upon me," said Nick.

*See No. 717 NICK CARTER WEEKLY, "The Master Rogue's Alibi."

## CHAPTER II.

### PAPERS WHICH DISAPPEARED.

Colonel Turnieff fidgeted for a moment in his chair. Then with some abruptness he said:

"Will you pardon me, Mr. Carter, if I mention another subject first? I wish to do so because our conversation, since you entered the room, has suggested that what I wish now to speak about may have some bearing upon my errand here to-day."

"Speak as you please, Colonel Turnieff," replied Nick. "I will tell you that I don't know a thing about your errand here. I have been instructed that a gentleman would call upon me, sent here by the Russian ambassador; farther than that my information does not extend. If you were to talk about the North Pole, or the South Pole, it would be all the same to me—save only that I would like to get at the real purpose of your visit as soon as possible."

"Certainly. I was about to refer again to my father."

"Yes? Well?"

"Did you, perhaps, know him personally?"

"No. I never met him or saw him. All that I know about him refers to his unfortunate death, in Paris, some time ago."

"Do you know any of the particulars in relation to his—death?"

"Only such as were related to me by the chief of the secret police of Paris, when I was in that city on quite another matter. The subject of your father came up between us, and it was mentioned; that is all."

"You were told that he—that he killed himself?"

"If it is a painful subject to you, colonel, why continue it? Yes, I was so informed."

"Were you also informed of the circumstances associated with his death?" the Russian persisted.

"Yes. Of some of them, at least. I did not go into the subject definitely. It was not of especial interest to me at the time."

"Will you tell me what was told to you?"

"Really, colonel——"

"Pardon me, sir, I know that this seems entirely beside the subject of my call here, but possibly it may not appear so later on. If you will be patient with me, I will be your debtor."

"Very well, sir."

"Will you tell me what was told to you in regard to the death of my father?"

The detective hesitated. What had been told to him was, in a way, a privileged communication imparted in confidence. Presently he replied:

"I will tell you as much about it as I think I may with discretion. The main points of my information are these: Your father, Prince Turnieff, was sent to Paris on a secret mission of some sort for his government. He took there with him a very large sum of money presumably his own. Also while there he made a great display of valuable jewels, though why he did so does not appear."

"Your information is entirely correct so far, Mr. Carter. I will add to it in that particular. He had with him the equivalent of two hundred thousand dollars in cash in your money. He also had in his possession at that time certain jewels which were the property—or had been—of a family that had suffered exile. Those jewels had been forfeited to the crown together with other possessions, and——"

"My dear sir, what has all this to do with our matters?"

"Bear with me a moment, please."

"Go on, then."

"The jewels which my father displayed with seeming recklessness were of very great value—they were worth another sum equal to the amount he had with him in cash. My father was not a person given to needless display, and so you may assume that there was a definite purpose in his conduct in making a display of them, and in his reckless expenditure of money also. All that formed a part of his mission there."

"I understand you. Well?"

"Now, will you tell me what more you heard about his death?"

"No. I will not say any more on the subject now."

"Then I will tell you—for I perceive that you hesitate only to spare my feelings, and I honor you for it. While in Paris, he was very much in the company of a woman who had at that time, and has since had, many names. To the police she was known as 'The Leopard.' Am I correct?"

"Quite so."

"My father made his home in a palace which he had taken, furnished, in the Fauborg St. Germain. He was found dead in the library of that palace one afternoon, with a bullet hole in his brain. There was a pistol beside him, and a partly written note on the table near him, telling that he had decided to kill himself. The last person who was in his company before that happened was 'The Leopard,' the beautiful young woman in whose company he had been seen so often.

"But she had been gone from the house a long time before the shooting was supposed to have taken place, and although she was taken to the prefecture of police and closely questioned, not a thing could be determined against her. Is that substantially what was told to you by the chief, Mr. Carter?"

"Yes."

"Did he inform you also that not one centime of the money, and not one trace of the jewels, could be found after the death of my father?"

"Yes."

"Thank you. That is all I care to ask you about the circumstance at the present moment; but I wish to add to it one statement of my own."

"Well?"

"My father went to Paris on a secret mission in which there was almost no hope of success; a secret mission in which his life was at stake from the moment he departed from St. Petersburg. The display of the jewels was a necessary part of his enterprise. The possession of a great sum of money, and the lavish expenditure of that money, was another necessary part of it. The woman known as 'The Leopard,' was supposed at that time to be also in the service of Russia, but it has been thought—not determined, mind you, but only suspected—since then, that she was all the while in the actual service of another government. It

was because she was ostensibly in the service of Russia, that she was seen so much with my father. That was another definite part of the enterprise."

"I understand."

"My own opinion—and it is only an opinion, not knowledge—is that she was all the time working against my father in Paris. If she did not actually murder him, she was nevertheless the direct cause of his death. Well, sir, now I come to the point toward which this conversation has tended."

"Yes?"

"That woman—'The Leopard'—is now in the city of Washington. She lives there openly, supposedly the possessor of a large fortune. She occupies a large house in one of the fashionable streets of the capital where she entertains lavishly. She is a woman of most remarkable beauty and attractiveness. She is a creature of many fascinations. All who go near her fall under the spell she casts about her."

"You surprise me, colonel," said the detective. And indeed it was so. Nick Carter was surprised that Juno had ventured to return to the United States so soon. "But assuredly she does not call herself 'The Leopard,' in Washington society, does she?"

"No, indeed. She is now the Countess Juno Narnine—Countess Narnine—and Narnine happens to be the name of one of the branches of my own family. I can positively assure you that she is in no manner related to them, notwithstanding the fact that this woman has succeeded in establishing herself beyond question, and supplied credentials which cannot be denied. Now, sir, I will get down to the purpose of my visit here."

"Wait a moment. Why have you chosen to tell me about this countess? We will call her so, since she has succeeded in establishing her right to use the name."

"Because she has something to do with the purpose of my call upon you—I think."

"Oh. You think so. You are not sure of it, then?"

"Nobody has ever been sure of anything connected with that woman, sir."

"I see. You regard her much as the chief over in Paris did."

"I am not informed concerning his regard for her, nor as to what his estimate of her character may have been; but speaking for myself, I can say that she is at once the most compelling creature, the most attractive woman, the most fascinating personality, and the most beautiful human creation that God ever put into the world. At the same time she is the most dangerous. All the objections to her are summed up in that one word dangerous, Mr. Carter."

"One more question, colonel."

"Yes, sir."

"If I had not addressed you as prince, and hence, had not called up the unpleasant recollections of your father, would you have mentioned this woman in connection with the matter that sent you to me?"

"I should have mentioned her, but not in the manner I have now chosen. Her name would have been mentioned, but not in just the way I have done it."

"Would you have told me this story about your father, and his relations with her, if the subject had not been brought about in the manner it was?"

"No. I should not have done that—now."

"But later you might have done so?"

"Yes. Later I am certain that I would have done so."

"Why? I would like to know that before we proceed. You see you are somewhat ambiguous, Colonel Turnieff."

"I don't know that I can explain why, unless it arises from the natural inclination to clear up the mystery of my father's death. That is human—and filial—isn't it?"

"Decidedly."

"Now, shall we get at the object of my mission here to you?"

"Yes."

"May I ask you, first, if you are at all familiar with the methods employed in diplomatic affairs, where the thing to be done is a secret one and bears no direct relations to the official duties of an ambassador?"

"Your question is somewhat involved. I will reply to it generally. Yes; I know that a representative of royalty, no matter where stationed, is supposed to take his orders without question, and to execute them literally, no matter what the consequences, or what means it may be necessary to employ."

"Very well, sir. My chief, whom I now represent unofficially, has been engaged upon an affair of great delicacy for his royal master. Concerned in that affair are papers of the vastest importance imaginable—of such supreme value that their loss cannot be estimated in words or in figures. Mr. Carter, one-half of those papers have disappeared absolutely. They must be recovered at any cost. In the meantime the remaining half of them must be safeguarded so thoroughly that there can be no chance that they will follow after the others."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE WORK OF A SECRET AGENT.

"It seems to be your pleasure to speak in enigmas, colonel," said the detective.

"In enigmas? How so, sir?" was the reply.

"You speak of certain important papers which are of untold value, and announce that one-half of those papers have disappeared; as if the papers were a melon, or an apple that one might cut into two parts—dividing them equally. Be good enough to explain what you mean."

"Ah; I made the announcement just as it came to me; but I did not intend to puzzle you, Mr. Carter."

"Well?"

"Perhaps it will be the pleasure of the ambassador, when you talk with him, to explain to you exactly what those papers are; but I have not permission to do so. In fact I am not entirely informed upon the subject myself. I know only so much about them as it was necessary for me to know, to carry out my part of the work."

"I understand."

"Let me endeavor to explain in this way: His majesty, the czar, is interested in accomplishing a certain purpose that is well defined in his own mind, and in the minds of his counselors, which relates to another government—not the United States. You understand that, Mr. Carter?"

"I think so."

"I was instructed to assure you that you would not be asked to do anything that you could not conscientiously perform as a loyal citizen of the United States."

"Very well. Go on."

"The ambassador whom I represent was directed to carry on the secret work of that affair, and to direct it from his embassy, in Washington. He has done so. In carrying on the work a mass of documents has collected. They are entirely apart from his regular official duties as ambassador to the United States."

"I already understand that, sir."

"Among those documents which have collected, there are certain papers which, if placed upon this table in one package, might be contained in a rubber band, and might be deposited within the space contained in your greatcoat pocket. As I have stated, those documents—those to which I am referring just now—are of vast importance."

"I think I am sufficiently well assured of that, colonel."

"As a means of safety, these papers were not only written in cipher, but they were then redrawn, in halves, and the originals were destroyed. They were drawn up and written in such a manner that neither half of them could be deciphered without the other half. Do you follow me?"

"Perfectly."

"Those two halves, each necessary to the other half, were concealed, hidden away for safe-keeping, by the ambassador in person, in places known only to himself supposedly; in localities widely different. Understand that they were not yet complete, or they would have been forwarded to St. Petersburg before now. That is what was to be done with them as soon as they were completed."

"Yes."

"They would, each half by itself, have been sent to St. Petersburg—and by entirely different routes. For example, I might have been dispatched there with one-half of them in my charge, ignorant of what I carried with me, save only that they were documents of importance to be delivered exactly as directed."

"Yes."

"I might have been sent with them by way of China; the other half might have been sent direct by another person. Each of us would have known nothing of the other one. Understand?"

"Yes. But what has that to do with their disappearance?"

"I am merely endeavoring to impress upon you the care with which they were guarded, and would have been guarded to the end."

"Very well. I understand that."

"The documents were nearly complete, but not quite so. There remained one matter of importance to be accomplished, before the documents were forwarded, as I have described, to St. Petersburg."

"Yes."

"Well, sir, one of the halves of those prepared documents has disappeared from the place where the package was concealed. The ambassador instructed me to tell you that, so far as he is aware, no person other than himself knew where either of those packages was concealed. He wishes to have you go to Washington, to consult with him on the matter without delay, and he desires to impose entire secrecy concerning the affair upon you."

"Is that all?"

"That, Mr. Carter, is the purport of my mission here. I was to tell you that much. I could not tell you more than that, for the reason that my own knowl-

edge goes no farther. Whatever else there is to be told to you, the ambassador will tell you in person."

"You have no idea where the papers were concealed, colonel?"

"Beyond the surmise that they were somewhere within the embassy, I have not even an idea concerning them; and even that much is only a surmise."

"Colonel Alexis Turnieff, in a matter of this kind, one has to ask plain questions—so plain that they are sometimes offensive," said the detective, fixing his eyes upon the face of the man before him.

"Yes, sir. I can understand the necessity for that. I am not thin-skinned, Mr. Carter. If your statement in any manner applies to me, I will say that you are at liberty to put any questions to me that occur to you. But I must assure you again that I have absolutely no knowledge as to the contents of those papers."

"But you do know that name of the government, other than the Russian government, that they concerned; eh?"

"Yes; although I am not at liberty to tell you that. The ambassador——"

"I don't care to know it at the present time. What I do want to know—and this is one of the questions which might be offensive; particularly if you are entirely loyal to your chief—is this: Could the ambassador serve his own purposes, personal or otherwise, by making it appear that those papers had disappeared when in reality they had not done so?"

"Do you mean, would he steal them himself?" demanded Turnieff, in amazement.

"Words to that effect; yes."

"Impossible!"

"Now, if you had discovered where one of those packages was concealed—in making use of the pronoun, I refer not alone to yourself in person, but to every other member of the official household of the ambassador—would it have advantaged you or any other person within that household to have abstracted one of those packages?"

"I cannot conceive how it would have done so, Mr. Carter."

"I do not mean that papers so taken would necessarily be used, or passed on to other persons; but would it have been to the interest of any person of your knowledge to repress those papers?"

"The question, Mr. Carter, is beyond me. Remember, I am utterly ignorant of their contents."

"But knowing the country besides your own that they concern, you, being in the dipolmatic service, could make a shrewd guess regarding the purport of them, could you not?"

"No. Really, Mr. Carter, I could not. I have known enough about what has been going on, to have drawn conclusions several times; conclusions which I thought at the time were quite satisfactory, but which inevitably have proven to be entirely and utterly erroneous."

"How long a time have those papers been in preparation?"

"I do not know."

"How long a time have you been attached to the embassy at Washington?"

"Two years; rather more than that."

"They have been in preparation since you have been there?"

"Yes."

"And before that time?"

"I have reason to suppose so."

"Who would be chiefly interested in stealing papers of the sort you suppose them to be, colonel?"

"Ah; now you ask me a question which I can answer. Not directly; I don't mean that; but in a general way."

"Well?"

"I am only young in the service, Mr. Carter, but I have been sufficiently long engaged in it to know that whenever there is a diplomatic movement on foot, inimical to another country or government, the government which it threatens is pretty apt to have an inkling of the matter, or at least a suspicion."

"Yes. I should suppose so."

"We will say, then, that this affair threatens the government of Siam—which is preposterous, of course; I suggest it only by way of illustration."

"Yes."

"If the government of Siam were one of the first or second rate powers, it would have diplomatic representatives at every capital in the world. It would have secret agents all over the world. You understand that?"

"I do."

"Now, if it suspected that Russia was plotting some antagonistic move, it would watch Russia, not alone at St. Petersburg, but all over the world. It would consider carefully who the man might be in the diplomatic service of Russia, who would be most likely to be given the operation of such a delicate affair, and who could be entirely trusted with it; who possessed the brain capacity to carry it out; who was in every way competent."

"I understand you. Well?"

"Suppose that in such a case Siam decided that the ambassador to the United States was that man. Siam would at once dispatch a horde of secret agents to this country. Some of them would be Siamese, but the majority of them would be of other nationalities. They would belong to that class which become international spies through choice, and have little care what governments they serve; who go from the service of one to the service of another as readily as you or I would change our clothing."

"And it is your opinion, then, that Siam—we will keep up the fiction for the moment—has many secret agents in Washington now, and that one of them has managed to get his hands on those papers."

"Or her hands; yes. That is the idea."

"I understand you. Now—could one of those secret agents for the other power, by any possibility, become a member of the official family of your ambassador?"

"Why not, Mr. Carter?"

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE AMBASSADOR'S CABINET.

Nick Carter was seated in the private cabinet at the embassy, facing the ambassador.

He had just been conducted to that room, and the ambassador, a tall, stately gentleman of the inscrutable school, every inch the representative of his czar, was still standing beside his desk, with one hand resting upon it, while he bent a little forward toward the detective, devouring him with his piercing eyes.

And they were eyes which had been accustomed for years to read the characters of men of all nationalities, and of every walk in life.

Nick Carter felt at once that this tall gentleman was a power within himself, and that nothing short of an explosion of dynamite at his feet could move him out of his habitual calm.

"I have heard very satisfactory things about you, Mr. Carter, if you will pardon me for using that expression," the ambassador said slowly, picking his words, and still keeping his keen eyes upon the detective, while he retained that same attitude beside the desk. "I will not hesitate to say that the statements were made by no less a person than the present incumbent of the White House."

"Indeed?" replied the detective. "That is gratifying."

"Do not misunderstand me, Mr. Carter. He was not aware that I needed the services of a gentleman of your qualifications. Nobody has been made aware of that, save the man who went to New York to induce you to come here—and myself."

The detective bowed his head. He made no other reply.

"I suppose you are more or less well known in Washington?" the ambassador asked; and he passed around the desk to his chair.

"I suppose so."

"I apprehended that your personality is, also, more or less well known; and by that I refer also to your profession?"

"I suppose so," Nick replied again.

"That is why I made the appointment with you for this hour—midnight. I desired that as few persons as possible should know of your visit to this house."

"In that case, prince," replied the detective, smiling, "you should have made the appointment at noonday, instead of at midnight. One is less noticeable, if one arrives among others, than if one goes by oneself to a place of appointment. The best place to hold a secret conference is in the midst of a crowd; at least that has been my experience."

The prince—for he was one, although his title was rarely used in Washington—shrugged his shoulders.

"After all," he said, "the matter of the secrecy of your present employment is one that is entirely your own affair. I assume that if you are competent to take this matter in hand for me you are also perfectly capable of guarding the minor details connected with it."

"I think so."

"This city at the present time is filled with secret agents of another government than mine or yours—and those secret agents have been chiefly interested in watching me for a long time. I have no doubt that your presence here at the embassy is already known to them."

"More than likely it is."

"Nevertheless, Mr. Carter, it might be inferred that you have come here to see me on matters entirely your own; or at least not mine. It is quite as logical that you should represent one government as another."

"Yes; or none at all, prince."

"True."

"Before we go into the particulars of my visit here, prince, I would like you to tell me the name of that government whose spies swarm in the city at the present time."

"Oh, I shall not permit you to work in the dark, Mr. Carter. I have had no such intention, for that would thwart the very purpose of your employment."

The ambassador bent forward, selected a piece of paper and a pencil, wrote something on the paper, passed it over to the detective, and said:

"That is the name of the government whose spies are chiefly interested in the subject which we will presently discuss, Mr. Carter; but, if you please, we will not mention it to each other, even in a whisper or by so much as an innuendo."

"Certainly not."

"Walls have ears, you know; and sometimes eyes as well."

"I know. While I was talking with Colonel Turnieff, he had occasion to draw a simile, and he made use of the name of Siam. Suppose in referring to this country, the name of which you have written down here, we call it Siam."

"Good! A capital idea."

"And now, sir, I return this paper to you in order that you may destroy it yourself."

"Mr. Carter, I like your methods."

"Thank you. Now, prince, if you will get down to business——"

"At once. But first, how much did Turnieff tell you, and what conclusions did you draw from his manner of telling it?"

"Prince, so far as the information which you will tell me is concerned, he has told me nothing; and his manner made no impression upon me one way or another."

The ambassador smiled.

"You should have gone into the diplomatic service, Mr. Carter," he said.

"I seem to be in it now, prince," was the reply.

"True. But I perceive that you prefer not to commit yourself to any opinion until you have formed a positive one. I entirely approve of that course."

"Thank you. And now, prince, one matter before we proceed."

"Yes."

"You have taken it for granted since my arrival here, that I will accept the commission you wish to give me. I will say that I am quite ready to accept it, and that it is the sort of thing that I like to do. But nevertheless there are conditions which I must make before I agree to take this matter in hand."

"Oh, as to that, Mr. Carter, your recompense——"

"I had not even thought of that part of it. When the work is done, you will receive a bill for my services, which I will expect you to pay. I shall supply the money for my own expenses, and make them as liberal as seems necessary. But I was not referring to that subject."

"To what one, then?"

"To the matter in hand. I cannot take your case and carry it through to an end, depending upon half confidences, or only part confidences. I must be intrusted with full and entire confidence, otherwise we must let the matter drop where it is."

"You mean—just what do you mean, Mr. Carter?"

"I mean that I must know *all* of the story; not merely a part of it."

"I understand you, but I doubt——"

"Pardon me, prince, but if you doubt, let the matter stop where it is. There is absolutely no use continuing it. I must have your entire confidence, or none at all."

"To give you my full confidence in the manner you imply, Mr. Carter, I must betray the secrets of my sovereign, which are, in part, at least, reposed in me alone."

"Even so, sir, I cannot qualify what I have said. I cannot perform the service for you, if I am like the horse of a picador when it enters the bull ring; blindfolded. I must be able to see; and unless you can intrust me with the secrets of your sovereign, as well as with your own, I am not worthy to be trusted at all."

The ambassador was silent, tapping the top of the desk with his pencil.

But after a moment he raised his eyes and said:

"So be it, Mr. Carter. I will not caval with you; you are right. In order to carry out this matter to a successful issue, you must know as much as I do about it."

"Just so, prince."

"But bear in mind our agreement to refer to that unnamed country as Siam."

"I do."

"I will begin, then, by stating that some years ago I was ambassador to—er—Siam. Really, I will have to accustom myself to that form of expression, for upon my word I was never anywhere near Siam in my life."

"Never mind a small detail like that one, prince."

"No, indeed. Well, when I represented his majesty there, certain matters arose which led me to make a suggestion to my august master, which I believed would redound to the credit, and greatly to the aggrandizement also, of my own country."

"And that matter was—what?"

"I will go into all of that presently, Mr. Carter. It is not my purpose now to keep anything back from you; but permit me to get over the main point of the matter first."

"As you please."

"When I first proposed it, I was smiled at; then I scored. Heed was at last taken of my suggestions, and I was directed to begin work on the idea. That, I may say, happened ten years ago."

"It is not a new thing, then."

"From the point of time, it is not."

"Well, sir?"

"I remained in—er—Siam three years longer. Then I suggested that, in order to prosecute the work upon which I had begun action, it would be well to place another man there, and to send me to the court of St. James. I figured that I could work from there, with less chance of my purpose being discovered than from Siam itself."

"I understand you."

"Two years after that, I again suggested a change, and I came here."

"So you have actually been engaged upon it five years here in Washington."

"Yes."

"Well, sir?"

"Until I came here to Washington, I had reason to suppose that entire secrecy had been preserved; but almost at once after my establishment here, I became convinced that a suggestion of what I was doing, or trying to do, had reached the government of—er—Siam. In a short time I was sure of it. Spies from there began to appear. Of course I have a sufficient staff of spies at my own command, and it was not difficult for me to know that Siam was largely represented here. I put two and two together, and made up my mind that I and my work was the cause, or rather the reason of their presence."

"Naturally."

"Nevertheless, I have worked on confident in my ability to control affairs—until now; but at last they have succeeded in sending some person here, who has proved to be too keen for me. Certain of my papers, which I have safeguarded with the greatest care, have been stolen. Those papers must be found and restored; not because I cannot replace them, for I can do that; but because they must not be permitted to betray what I am doing."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE HOLLOW BEDPOST.

It was twelve o'clock when Nick Carter entered the cabinet of the ambassador; it was past four in the morning when he went out of it, and even then he did not leave the embassy itself, but was conducted to a room by his host where he said he would take about three hours' sleep.

The particulars of the conversation between them we need not give here. The facts of the case, so far as they concern the relation of this story, have been already given; but of one thing be assured: Nick Carter had his way in regard to the detailed confidence of the matters, and before parting with the ambassador he was in possession of all the secret.

The thing was a stupendous undertaking on the part of Russia, and had it been permitted to succeed, would have altered the map of the world to a considerable extent.

But the point of the case was this:

Important papers of vital interest to the Russian government—and of still more vital interest to the ambassador himself, so far as his reputation was concerned—had been mysteriously taken from the place where he had concealed them.

He did not believe that they would prove of any immediate value to that government which he disguised under the name of Siamese, because, as he assured the detective, it would be impossible to read even the half that had been stolen without the presence of the remaining half, which was still in his possession.

One word as to how the papers had been hidden away by the ambassador.

In the first place it must be understood that all the writing was upon exceedingly thin paper, such as is used by diplomatic agents the world over, because it has so little bulk that much of it can be put away within a very small space.

There were twenty-two of those thin sheets of paper in the stolen lot, and they had been rolled together tightly as one would roll a scroll or map. Then they had been put inside a tin cylinder that was less than an inch in diameter, and the cylinder itself, with the contents—now, where do you suppose a practical man like the ambassador would hide such an affair as that?

In his safe? Not at all.

Would he deposit them in a box at a safe-deposit institution? That would seem at first to be the logical place; but safe-deposit vaults have been opened before now, through subterfuge, and in other ways.

Moreover, it was necessary to hide them where they could be reached quickly, in case he should want them.

Well, the ambassador had selected a place most simple, after all.

Remember that the very set of papers of which the stolen ones formed one-half, had been a long time in preparation when the ambassador first came to the United States, and that the necessity for concealing them had already arisen.

One day at about that time, the ambassador, in riding through the country, across the river in Virginia, had passed, in his automobile, a place where an auction of household furniture was in progress.

He had stopped and turned back. While he looked on at the scene, more in amusement than with interest, an old-fashioned bedstead had been offered for sale.

It was a big four-poster, with canopy top and all; it was a handsome old thing, of the best mahogany—and the ambassador purchased it, suddenly possessed with an idea.

That idea he had carried into execution before the bed was delivered at the embassy; and it consisted in having a hollow receptacle bored into each of the legs of the bedstead.

Now stop a moment and consider just what this meant.

Remember that each of the legs of the bed held a caster; that the caster had to be affixed to a plug which would fit into the bottom of the hole, before it could do its duty. Remember that the foot-end of that bedstead was so heavy that three ordinary men could not have lifted it from the floor after it was in place, to remove the caster, and to get at the receptacles which they concealed.

Well, that was the condition.

The holes were bored into the legs of the bedstead, before the bedstead was delivered; the casters were arranged so they could be removed. After that, the ambassador simply kept an automobile jack in one of the closets of his room—and so you see, he was able to jack up the bed at any time he so desired, remove the caster, and to get at his tin cylinders.

And here the ambassador had been cute again.

Although there was a receptacle in each one of the legs of the bedstead, he made use of only one of them; but that one was bored to twice the length of the tin cylinder, and, instead of hiding the two cylinders he wished to conceal inside two of the hollows, he put them both in the same one; one above the other, affixing the top one in its place by sticking it there with a piece of wax, so that it would cling, but yet could be easily dislodged.

That fact had saved one of the cylinders when the other had been stolen.

Doubtless it had not occurred to the thief that both cylinders were in the same cavity, and probably they had searched all four of them; but it remained that one of them had not been taken.

The problem was, how had any person been able to discover the hiding place?

The ambassador assured Nick Carter that no other person than himself was aware of the hiding place; that he had never taken any person into his confidence, not even his wife or his daughter.

The room was his own room, which he occupied alone; the bed was so huge an affair that it was never moved from its position. How, then, had any person determined where the hiding place had been arranged?

The ambassador asked the detective all these questions; and to them Nick replied:

"It does not interest us to know how the hiding place was discovered, unless that was the quickest way of recovering the lost papers; but it is not. The only thing for us is the fact that they were taken—and it is a clear and logical deduction that whoever took them has passed them on to another person."

"That is undoubtedly true," the ambassador replied.

"What excuse have you made for keeping that automobile jack in your room?"

"None at all. I simply kept it there."

"How often was it your habit to remove those papers from their hiding place?"

"Not once in six months. Only when there was something to be added to them."

"When was the last time that you had them out, before you discovered the loss?"

"Rather more than a month ago."

"How did it happen that you discovered the loss?"

"Very simply. I found the jack in the middle of the floor. The sight of it there alarmed me. I closed the door, pulled the curtains, examined the hollow post, and discovered what had happened."

"Now, just when was that?"

"Exactly one week ago to-night."

"What time of day or night was it when you made the discovery?"

"It was two o'clock in the morning. The papers were stolen between nine o'clock that night and then. I had been inside of my room at nine o'clock in the evening, and everything was in order then. I passed the evening at a theatre, and accompanied

some friends to supper after it. It was two when I entered my room and made the discovery."

So much for the manner of the loss.

Concerning the papers themselves, Nick had asked the following questions:

"You have referred to the swarm of spies for that other government, who are now in the city, presumably for the sole purpose of watching you. How many of them do you know, or, how many of them have you knowledge about?"

"Just an even dozen."

"Have you reason to believe that there are more than that number here?"

"There may be another dozen, or a score more of them, for all I know."

"How could they, or any of them, discover the existence of the papers in the first place?"

"Merely by conjecture; but it was a natural conclusion. They must know that it has been necessary, during all these years since I have been engaged on the matter, to keep very careful data. My memory could not be depended upon in a matter so vital. Hence, it has been a perfectly natural assumption that such papers existed. The thing was, to discover the hiding place—and it was discovered."

"Have you reason to suppose that any other effort than this one has even been made to steal the papers?"

"Certainly. There have been seven or eight attempts during the ten years, or, rather, during the last seven of them; all but one during the last five."

"What was done at those attempts?"

"Oh, burglars have entered my house. Thieves of the sneak-thief order have ransacked my rooms at one time and another, notwithstanding my watchfulness. 'A' box at a safe-deposit institution was opened through subterfuge—but nothing was taken from it, and I would not have discovered that strange hands had been inside it, had not the manager mentioned something about the man I had sent there."

There was one other point concerning which we will repeat some of the conversation between the detective and the ambassador.

"Of the dozen spies whom you know to be in this city, keeping watch on you, and of whom you have given me a list, which are the ones you deem most competent to have carried this theft into effect?"

"Either of the first two on the list. The man, Rafael Delorme, and the woman, Dolores Delorme, his wife. They are unquestionably at the head of the system of spies, which we call Siamese; the others are only their puppets."

"Do they know that you are aware of their business here?"

"They would be very poor spies indeed if they were not aware of it—and they are the slickest of their kind."

"There is no other one among the twelve whom you think is clever enough to have done this thing?"

"Any one of them is clever enough, if directed by either of the Delormes; but with the possible exception of Jules Legrande, who is really a Greek, notwithstanding his French name, I don't think any one of them could have carried it off alone."

"Now, outside of this dozen on the list, is there any other person in Washington, man or woman, toward whom your suspicions have been directed, believing that he or she might be a spy in the service of Siam?"

"Yes. There is one."

"Who is that one, prince?"

"She is called Countess Narnine. She acknowledges the given name of Juno. In Paris, St. Petersburg, Vienna, and other cities of Europe, she was long known as 'The Leopard.' And I wish to assure you, Mr. Carter, that she is more dangerous than all the others put together—if she is a—er—Siamese spy."

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE WOMAN SPY.

"Juno again," the detective had mused, when he heard that statement; but he did not say it aloud, although he did question the ambassador on one more point which the mention of her name had brought to his mind.

"Your letter to me implied that you had some reason to suspect Turnieff; if not of the theft itself, then of something. What was it, and why did you select him?" he asked.

"I do not suspect Turnieff, and I do not wish to be so understood. My belief in him is as thorough as it can be, and I would require positive proof to convince me of his disloyalty. Yet, Mr. Carter, in a case of this kind, one suspects everybody."

"Well, go on, please. Tell me exactly why you mentioned him to me in your letter, in the manner you used; why you thought it necessary to write a special letter to me about it."

"I had two reasons," the ambassador replied, without hesitation. "I will give them to you exactly as they occurred to me."

"Please."

"There is no one in this household who is so near to me in a confidential capacity as Turnieff—not even my secretary. I have always, ever since he has been with me, intended to employ him as one of the messengers, when the time should come to send the documents to my august master."

"Well?"

"It has been necessary that one member of my household should know that I had a secret mission, in addition to my regular one. Turnieff does not know, has not known, and would never know until after its completion, what that mission is. But he does know what the name of the country is which you and I have designated by the name of Siam. Now, that is one point, and it is every bit as far as it goes. It would break Turnieff's heart if he believed that I had suggested that much about him."

"But there is more?"

"Yes; on an entirely different basis."

"Well, what is it?"

"It refers to that woman who has purchased the title, or has married it, or has procured it in some way that makes it hers, and gives her a right to use it—Countess Narnine."

"Juno," said Nick.

"Yes. That is the first name she claims. I never heard that it is hers, more than many of the others she has made use of in the past."

"In what way do you associate Turnieff with her? Why should any association with her by him give rise to suspicion against him?"

"I have said that it does not amount to suspicion against him; only that I must search in every direction around me, Mr. Carter."

"Yes. I understand."

"Well, I will speak of the woman first before I refer to him in connection with her."

"Very well."

"Once upon a time, to my certain knowledge, that woman served Russia in the capacity of secret agent. On that occasion she was sent to Paris, in company with the father of Turnieff. There were strange things happened there. The woman evidently sold out to others, although it could never be established that she did so—and actually she finally succeeded in proving the charge against another. You may rest assured that that other person died very suddenly—as she would have done, had she not established her innocence."

"I don't go in for assassination, prince."

"Nor I. But sudden deaths happen frequently among traitors in the secret-agent business, nevertheless. The woman has been in the service of other countries since then, we have reason to think, although we do not know it. Just now she appears to have somehow succeeded to great wealth, and to be living on her income, which seems large. There is not a thing or a circumstance to disprove that view. Nevertheless, she is here, and there is no reason on earth why she should be here, unless it is in the interests of Siam."

"Well?"

"She is cleverer than the cleverest. She is almost uncanny in her abilities and profound astuteness. While I haven't a thing to bear me out in what I say, I haven't a doubt on earth that she is, at this moment, a Siamese spy."

"And as such——"

"Wait; I haven't quite got to that yet. During that Paris experience of hers, to which I just now referred, when she was an aid to my friend Alexis Turnieff, the father of my military aide, he was killed. It was said that he shot himself. Circumstances surrounding the affair upheld that view of the matter; but those who knew the man personally knew then, and know now, that he was not the man to have taken his own life. He was the soul of honor and uprightness. A large fortune in cash and jewels disappeared at the time of his death, and was stolen—if it can be said that things are stolen when they are taken by the people to whom they really belong.

"But that money and the jewels had been forfeited to the throne. Ah, well! That is political history, and has nothing to do with the things I am telling you; only I wished to say that the jewels and money probably found its way to just the hands where Russia did not wish it to go.

"Now, Mr. Carter, I have always believed, and I believe now, that 'The Leopard' caused the death of Prince Turnieff, if she did not actually shoot him herself—and I more than half believe that."

"And you are attempting to tell me that young Turnieff believes that view of the case also."

"I am attempting to tell you more than that. What I started to say was that ever since Countess Narnine appeared here, Turnieff has been a devotee at her shrine. He has fluttered around her like a moth around a candle flame. He has been in her train constantly. He goes nightly to her house; or, when he is not there, he is an attendant at functions where he knows she will be present."

"Do you mean to tell me that he is in love with her?"

"No; not unless love and hate are akin. He is bent on vengeance for the untimely death of his father. That is why he pursues her."

"Then how do you find a cause for suspicion against him in this matter, because of his intimacy with the countess?"

"Ah; there you have me again. I do not know. I cannot answer that question save in a most general way."

"Well, in a general way, then."

"I know that woman's possibilities; I know her capabilities—or at least some of them. Wherever she is concerned, I am afraid; not for myself, for I think I am above and beyond her wiles; but for others."

"Just what do you mean to imply, prince?"

"That Turnieff would be as clay in her hands, if she chose to exert herself against him; that she would play with him as a tigress might play with a tiny mouse—or as her namesake, the leopard, might toy with a kitten. With her, he is as a child in the hands of a giant."

"Still I do not see——"

"No, nor do I. But I have heard it said that she has great powers of fascination; that strong men have gone down beneath her wiles; that she molds men as potters mold clay. May it not be that she has found a way to mold him, and to turn him into a traitor to me and to his emperor?"

"That is going rather far, isn't it, prince?"

"Yes; too far. I admit that. But I try to look on every side. Mr. Carter, I would like to make a suggestion, if you will permit it. I have said that you should go your own way entirely about this case, but all the same there is one suggestion that I would like to make."

"What is it? Make it by all means."

"Go and see that woman. Manage to be introduced to her in such a way that she will be forced to receive you. Interest her. Study her. Try to read her. Try to fathom the unsounded depths of her. Then come to me and tell me about her."

"You seem to have entire confidence that I may not become one of her many victims," the detective remarked, with a smile.

"I had not thought of it; really. It had not occurred to me. Perhaps, after all, you had best keep away from her."

The detective laughed outright.

"I observe, prince, that you do fear her. But I think that you need have no fear for me. I will confess to you that I have already seen her and know her. I have met her and talked with her, twice, in fact."

"You have?"

"Yes; once in this country, when she happened to be a Mrs. Ledger Dinwiddie;* once again in Paris—after that. But the fact remains that I can claim an old acquaintanceship with her, and that I do not think she will be inclined to deny it to me."

"Ah! That is good—perhaps."

"I think it is very good; for I entirely agree with you that she is in this city in the interests of Siam; that she has been sent here to discover your secrets; that she, and not the Delormes, husband and wife, engineered the theft of those papers—and that now she will be more eager than ever to get possession of the other half of them."

"Then you will seek her?"

"Before darkness has fallen upon another day; or at least, before the artificial lights which succeed darkness have been extinguished."

"Beware of her, Mr. Carter."

"Forewarned is forearmed, you know, prince," laughed the detective. "But that reminds me of something that I must say to you on that point."

"Well?"

"I know the habits of you gentlemen, when a man like myself is engaged in your service. You have one of your regular spies watch that man. I will have none of that, prince. If I discover that it is done in my case—and I shall discover it if it is done—I will throw up your case on the instant, and have nothing more to do with it."

"It shall not be done, Mr. Carter, I promise you."

"Another thing: If you should get reports from any person that I seem to be worshiping at the shrine of the countess, along with Turnieff, you are to understand that it is a part of the game, and that I am doing it with my eyes wide open, although they may have the appearance of being closed all the time."

"I will understand."

"In the meantime let Turnieff continue as he has started out. Let him have his head and go as far as he likes. I may use him as a foil in what I intend to do."

"But you are going to probe into the life of that woman; eh?"

"Yes; and so deeply that she will wince. So thoroughly that if she stole those documents we will recover possession of them; and that, too, very soon."

"I wish I could be assured of that, Mr. Carter."

*See preceding number of NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IN THE NET OF A SIREN.

Nick Carter paused just inside the doorway.

The scene before him was a resplendent one, and not to be duplicated in the city of Washington, so rumor had said; certainly, the hostess who presided over it all was not to be duplicated anywhere else in the world.

For the scene upon which the detective looked was that of a formal function at the home of Countess Juno Narnine and the countess herself defied vocabularies, when an adequate description of her was sought.

She was above and beyond description, this woman who had earned a reputation in every country of Europe; who had been nicknamed "The Leopard" by the police of Paris, not out of derision, but because of her sleekness, her beauty, her grace, her litheness—and doubtless her ferocity also.

The detective had thought it best to wear no disguise at all; to appear there in his own proper person; to come upon the hostess suddenly and without announcement, and so to surprise her, if that were possible, although he had not a doubt that she had been informed of his presence in the city.

He had managed purposely to arrive at the house rather late, and already the parlors were thronged with guests, for her's was one of the most popular houses in the capital—not alone because of the beauty of the hostess, but because of the entertainment one found there, and the people one met there.

As Nick halted he drew backward a little, screening himself for a moment behind other persons who were only too eager to crowd ahead of him, for he wished to study the scene for a time before he thrust himself directly into it.

He saw her at the far end of the room, the centre of a throng that had gathered around her chair; for she sat like an enthroned queen, upon a raised dais, the better to receive her guests—and the moment had not yet come for her to leave it and to mingle with them.

The admiration that was given to her was not stinted; and it was due, moreover, for the detective confessed to himself then and there that never had he seen a more beautiful human creature.

Brightness, vivacity, wit—every attribute that goes to adorn beauty and make it a compelling factor were hers.

Statesmen, professional men, persons of prominence in every walk of life were grouped around her, each vying with all the others to do homage to her charms.

Such was the scene upon which Nick Carter gazed as he paused just inside the doorway and studied the environment.

"A wonderful woman, truly," he told himself, with just the suggestion of a shrug, and he withdrew still farther into the background, waiting for a better opportunity to present himself.

The moment came at last.

He saw that she was about to leave her raised chair and to mingle with her guests. He discerned an uneasy movement around her which told him that; and just at the instant when he believed that he would be in time, he moved forward and stood before her.

She had been talking with a man who stood beside her, and did not notice his approach; did not realize that another guest had approached until he stood directly before her. Then she raised her eyes and saw him.

A person standing near them and watching her would not have noticed that her expression changed at all; but Nick Carter saw that it did.

There was just the slightest narrowing of the eyes; just an added depth to them; just the suggestion of a slight start in her attitude, unobservable to others, but plainly noted by the detective, although it endured not more than the fraction of an instant.

Then, her face beamed. A bright smile, which was also glad in its expression, illumined her eyes and her features. You would have said that she was unqualifiedly delighted to discover him there.

She did what she had not done to another guest that evening. She started from her chair and extended her hand in cordial greeting; and she followed that hand with the other one, thus signally honoring him by giving him both. He took them both, and for a moment held them, looking down into her eyes as he did so, with an expression which the spectators took to be one of intense admiration, if not more; with an expression which she must have seen, and noted, and wondered about, too, in her inmost heart.

The murmurs about them became hushed for the instant.

It seemed as if all eyes in the room were fixed upon those two; and yet no one stood quite near enough to them to hear her low-toned greeting, or his reply to it.

"You have not forgotten?" she murmured, with that bewitching smile which could not have been counterfeited by another.

"I am here; that should be your answer," he returned, and he smiled back at her.

She did another thing then that was not in accord-

ance with her usual custom. She took his arm deliberately when she knew that a dozen others were waiting near, to have that very honor bestowed upon them—and among them it may be said that Colonel Alexis Turnieff was one—and she said:

"It is my habit to rest for a few moments in the conservatory, after the fatigue of the reception. Take me there, please."

The others drew backward, away from them. A lane was formed through the throng, and Nick walked through it with Juno clinging to his arm, the envied of every man in the room.

No one could surmise why she had signaled him out for this especial honor. Nick Carter would have found it difficult to have told the reason himself; perhaps she had none, and it was only a whim and impulse.

But nevertheless Nick asked himself if she had in mind the last scene between them, in the parlor of her suite of rooms in Paris, when she had believed that she hypnotized him.

That had been a scene never to be forgotten, because the like of it had never happened before, perhaps, in the life of any man. For, be it known here that Juno had long been a student of hypnotism; had long practiced the arts of it; had been taught its uses and possibilities by those who were experts in its practice, and had become an adept, not even second to the learned professors at the medical colleges.

And on that occasion to which reference has been made, Juno had sought to cast Nick Carter under the spell of her influence—and had been led to believe that she succeeded. The detective caught himself wondering if she had discovered since then the fraud that he had practiced upon her.

"She must have discovered it," he told himself. "She knows that the orders she gave me when she supposed me to be under the hypnotic spell were not carried out. She knows that Bare-Faced Jimmy was brought back to this country, and tried, and convicted. She must know all of that."

But these thoughts found no outward expression on the part of the detective. He walked along beside her, with her arm clinging to his, and so they passed among the guests, and at last went through a draped doorway and entered upon a spacious conservatory.

Others were there, to be sure; but there was one seat which was sacred to the hostess, and it was an unwritten law of the house that when she occupied it with another she was not to be disturbed, save by her expressed wish.

She guided the detective toward it, seated herself, and motioned Nick to a place beside her.

"Now," she said to him, "we are as isolated here as if we were behind closed doors with a substantial guard at every outlet. No one approaches me when I am here, unless I request it, so we can converse for a time undisturbed."

"Isn't it an unusual honor that you do me, countess?" the detective asked, replying to her.

"No; not particularly. I always bring a companion here with me, after the fatigue of receiving for two hours on that raised dais. Now—why are you here?"

"Can you ask that, countess?"

"I do ask it," she smiled back at him.

"I am here because I had the impulse to come. I have not forgotten our last interview."

"No? I had hoped that you might forget it—at least, a part of it."

"Perhaps it is the part you would have me forget that I best remember," he replied softly.

"I beg, Mr. Carter, that you will not be like all the others, and begin by making love to me offhand, as if I expected it as my due. Be original at least, for I know that you are not in the least in that condition."

"What does not exist, may be made to exist, countess. Love commands most people, but it seems to me that you have transposed the rule, and that you command love."

She shrugged her white shoulders and laughed softly; she also flushed, and turned her matchless eyes full upon him for a moment, remaining silent while she did so. Then she replied with studied deliberation:

"No; I do not command love. If I could, I would do so now. Do you regard that as rather a bald statement, my friend? Perhaps it is so; but nevertheless it is true. Have you ever walked past beautiful grounds that surrounded a mansion which attracted you, and have you said to yourself, in passing it, 'If I could enter and claim it as mine, I would throw open the gate and enter'?"

"Perhaps. I have not thought of it in exactly that way."

"No? I will draw the simile a bit farther. You see in that place a haven where you might, if you would, enter and be happy and content forevermore; but you look a second time and discover that the gate is locked against you—so you pass on your way. You remember the garden of flowers, and the mansion only

vaguely, yet knowing that you could have been content had you entered there. Do you understand me?"

"I am afraid not, countess."

"You do, but you will not admit it. Well, I will be more explicit. The atmosphere around you, Mr. Carter, is the garden of flowers; you are the mansion; but the gate is locked against me, and I may not enter. Sometimes, my friend, we pass such scenes too late in life to know where to search for the key."

She was still looking into his eyes.

She had bent nearer to him. There was a deeper flush upon her cheeks and brow, and her eyes were glowing with a light which must, in her early life, have given her the name of Siren.

She reached out one hand tentatively, and permitted it to fall upon the back of one of his hands. Her fingers tightened upon it, almost imperceptibly, yet they tightened, and they clung there.

The detective felt the thrill of her; realized the magnetism of the woman; knew the danger he courted; understood that she was openly making a bid for his admiration—perhaps for something more.

He found himself returning her gaze; he saw her lips, dimly, as through a haze, and he knew that they were protected from the view of others by the screen of leaves that shaded them—and then he saw one of her white arms steal softly upward toward him, and he knew that in another instant it would wind itself around his neck.

Still he did not move.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FURY OF A WOMAN SCORNED.

He caught the wrist of that white arm just in time, and gently but firmly he forced it back again upon her lap, although he did not attempt to remove her other hand, where it was resting on the back of one of his.

"You refuse me the key?" she murmured, so low that it was almost a whisper. "You keep the gate locked against me? You shut me out, leave me in the cold? Are you wise to do that, my friend?"

"Who shall tell what wisdom is, Juno?" he replied to her. "When we deem ourselves the wisest, we are often the most stupid. But you are right, nevertheless. The gate is locked—only there are two gates instead of one, and that one behind which you are sheltered is an impregnable one. I would not dare to open it if I could do so, and I doubt if I could."

"You charge me with insincerity, my friend?"

"Ah, that term is also ambiguous, countess. You are sincere enough so far as your purpose is concerned; but that purpose is not what you would have me think it is."

She drew her hand away from his. For a time she was silent, and Nick, watching her, saw that she was thinking deeply. He waited, wondering what would be the fruit of that thought.

At last she turned to him, and looked into his eyes again; but now her expression had changed greatly; there was a depth to it which he had not seen there before.

"Will you believe me if I speak to you with entire frankness?" she asked him.

"Yes, countess. At least I will try to do so."

"I will be, for once at least, entirely sincere."

"I believe that you mean what you say."

"Then listen. This scene between us outrages all precedent, does it not?"

"In a way it does; yes."

"I invited you to come here with me to this secluded corner of my conservatory. I drew you down upon the seat beside me. I have deliberately made love to you, and I have as deliberately, by my actions, given you permission to take me into your arms—I, who have the power to command the love of almost any man in those rooms yonder. That is true, isn't it, my friend?"

"Quite true."

"I did not begin, as I would have done if I were playing at love, did I, by inviting you to make love to me, by using coy glances, and all the little arts that a woman is master of—I did not do any of that."

"No."

"Well, I will tell you why I have outraged precedent. It is because, when I drew that comparison between you and the mansion with its garden of flowers, I spoke the truth. You have attracted me strangely, Nick Carter; not as other men might do, but as only you could do, and have done it. I can see in you the possibilities of supreme content—and Heaven knows that I long for content, as we all long for the unattainable. I do not love you—but I could love you. You are not necessary to me—but you could be so. One does not fall into love blindly—at least not one like I am, or like you are, possessed of brain and of judgment. I wonder if you understand me now?"

"I think so."

"You know who I am. I know that you do know; and yet you have kept the secret. You are aware that

I was born to better things; that no woman in the world is better connected than I am. Yet in my youth I threw that all away from me and went out into the world, driven there by one foolish act, and I have been in that world ever since buffeted by it; maligned by it. In that outer world there is no content anywhere.

"I am like other women in that I long for content. I am like other women in that I have a heart for love. I am like other women in that I am loyal to one thing at least, and that is to myself. I am like other women after all, and it is only those who do not know my real self who think me different. Can you understand that?"

"Yes. I think so."

"You have the key to content, if you will give it to me. I hate this life of mine, in which there is nothing that is true and real. I crave the real things of life—and, my friend, all the real things of life depend upon just one quality—love.

"Wait, my friend, bear with me just a moment longer. Now that I have begun—and I have never talked frankly to any person before now—I have the wish to complete what I began to say."

"Yes, countess."

"When the sinner, moved by the exhortations of the revivalist, goes down in front and falls upon his knees and is converted, that sinner becomes a changed being. All the black past is forgotten. Redemption has been found. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"Well, I am that sinner. All that has gone before in my checkered life could be forever forgotten, and my soul might be saved—with that key to the gate of content which you could hold out to me—if you would."

"Countess, I——"

"And you and I together—ah, what could we not accomplish? You in your profession, and I helping you, assisting you, working for you and with you! Think of it! Think of the perfection of it! The beauty of it! But—the gate is closed and locked."

"The gate is closed and locked," he replied soberly.

"And yet, Nick Carter, I am a good woman. You doubt it, but it is true. I have not been good perhaps in the little things of life, but in the great ones I have been so. No man lives who can point his finger at me in scorn; no man who is dead might have ever done so. I have never committed a crime in my life, or abetted one, although I have been accused of many crimes."

"And yet, countess——"

"Ah!" she interrupted him. "I know what you would say. You would charge me with things that the chief of police in Paris told you about. You would say that I had lured men to their death. It is not true. You would say that men have killed themselves because of me. It is not true in so far as it was a studied fault of mine, or that I led them to it, or was willfully responsible for it.

"My life has been a strange one, my friend. One may cleave closely to the awful precipices, and yet avoid them. That is true, is it not?"

"Yes; it is quite true."

"Nicholas Carter, I would at least have you judge me fairly—and the day will come when you will do so."

She stopped suddenly, laughed in a low tone, and half turned away.

"And now," she said, with an entire change of tone, "let us return to present things and to the life we really live, not the one which we would like to live. The life we do live is false, hollow, filled with deceits, subterfuges, lies! The life I long to live in is true, sound, upright, filled with fairness and frankness and honesty. Now again—why are you here to-night?"

"I came here to this house, countess, expressly to see you and to talk with you."

"Then you have accomplished your desire. Why are you in Washington?"

"I am here in pursuit of my profession."

"Ah; that is frankness, at least—and we were not to be frank with each other any more, were we?"

"You must follow your own bent in that particular, countess, and permit me to follow mine."

She arose from the seat she had been occupying, and he rose also and stood near her.

"I will return frankness with frankness—for this once," she said, with one of her inscrutable smiles. "I know why you are here. I will tell you enough to assure you that I do know it; enough to assure you that I am aware of your own shrewdness, and therefore am perfectly assured of what you suspect me."

"Well?"

"You came to Washington at the invitation of the ambassador for Russia. That invitation was taken to you in person by colonel, the Prince Alexis Turnieff—who believes that I murdered his father, or at least was the cause of his death. You have become convinced that I am in the service of a country which, at this time, believes it has reason to keep a sharp watch upon the things that Russia is doing, or is at-

tempting to do, and you have taken it upon yourself to watch me. Isn't that true?"

"Since you believe it, countess, it seems a waste of words to say that it is, or that it is not true. Have it so, if you wish."

"Ah; you will not be quite frank with me."

"Perhaps it is best, countess, that we meet on the common ground of distrust."

She started away from him. The remark stung her, and he could see that it had done so, although he had not intended to hurt her by what he said.

For a moment she stared at him, hard-eyed, suddenly cold, and he caught a glimpse of the other side of this woman's character.

"We meet on the common ground of distrust," she repeated after him. "So be it. I was not minded to have it so; but so be it. The common ground of distrust, say you! So be it. Mr. Carter, I must become willfully guilty of a grave breach of courtesy. I must tell you to your face that your presence here in my home is not congenial. I must ask you to leave it. I must inform you that your presence will not be tolerated here again."

The detective stared at her in amazement.

He had not expected this; had not anticipated anything of the kind. Truly hers was a many-sided character.

While he stared, she smiled ironically upon him. Then she raised her two hands and clapped them together loudly.

Instantly in response to the signal, many who were in the conservatory came toward them, and two servants hastened forward also, as if the clapping of her hands were a well-known signal to them.

Juno did not speak again until many of her guests and the servants were quite near.

Then she turned and spoke again, directly to the detective.

"Mr. Carter," she said, and there was no mistaking tone and air of offense which she managed to introduce into her voice and manner, "my servants will show you the way out. I believe that is all."

With a gesture that was worthy of an offended queen, she turned away from him, while the guests who had been observers of the scene stood and stared. One of the two servants moved forward.

"This way if you please, sir," he said. He had received his orders and he meant to execute them.

Alexis Turnieff strode forward to the centre of the group. His face was white and drawn with concentrated passion.

"One moment——" he began; but by a gesture Juno stopped him.

"Not another word, Alexis," she said sharply. "Your arm, if you please." And then: "My servants will show this man the way out. Come."

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## CHAPTER IX.

### A FIGHT IN THE STREET.

Nick Carter stopped at the corner just below the house to consider what had happened.

Unceremoniously he had been ejected from the home of the countess. Undeniably she had defied him, and she had managed to do it in the presence of many others among her guests. There was no doubt whatever that the affair would be the talk of the town by another day, and it would be surprising indeed if the whole thing were not a column long, or more in the morning papers.

The detective had been placed in many trying positions during the course of his experience, but never had he met with one which had been quite so original as this one.

Why had she done it, he asked himself as he stood there in thought, at the corner.

Was it because when she found she could not make a puppet of him she had resorted to the other extremity?

Had she really intended to make a puppet of him, or had she been sincere during those moments in the conservatory?

Who could tell? She had appeared sincere enough; but who could tell?

What was the detective to do now? It was out of the question that he should return to her house in any guise whatever. Juno read a part of his character well, in realizing that, driven thus from her house, Nick Carter would not return to it under any circumstances—unless, indeed, it were to make an arrest.

But it went without saying that he could not go there again as a guest, even in disguise. A detective has to do many things which are not congenial, but he does not have to do ungentlemanly or dishonorable things. This woman had seemed to know that in forcing him out of her house in the manner she had done, she had rid herself of his presence there for good.

And to arrest her was out of the question.

That could not be done under any circumstances, even if he could provide himself with proof positive that she had gone in person to the house of the ambassador, had entered it with burglarious intent, and had stolen the tin cylinder with its contents.

That would constitute a theft, of course; and the breaking and entering would be burglary under the law; but to accuse her, arrest her, or attempt to prosecute her for it, would be to defeat the ends at which his effort was aimed.

It would be also to nullify and destroy every effect of the ambassador's labors for ten years.

Another man in Nick Carter's place in that conservatory might have permitted Juno to twine her arms around his neck, and might have seized her in his arms and embraced her—might have made the most of that opportunity which she offered, and have traded upon that chance to accomplish what he wished to do.

Not so Nick Carter.

Another man might have gone far in succumbing to her, and might well have considered the case upon which he was engaged well lost—and all the world of self-respect with it—to have won Juno's love.

Not so Nick Carter.

Without egotism, he believed that she had been sincere to a certain extent in outlining her longing for content, and in her belief that with such a man as he she might find it; nor could he deny to himself that Juno possessed a powerful attraction for him.

But that terrible *if*.

If Juno had been different; if circumstances had not been just what they were; if the world had wagged differently.

"Bosh!" he ejaculated aloud, and started to move on. Instantly he was conscious that a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder, and he heard a voice exclaim:

"Wait a moment, sir!"

The detective turned about. Before him, tall and straight with his military manner, stood Alexis Turnieff.

"Ah, colonel——" he began; but the Russian stepped forward nearer to the detective.

He uttered an epithet. His arm swung outward and around, and if it had been permitted to continue upon its course, the open palm of Turnieff's right hand must have been brought into sharp contact with Nick Carter's cheek.

The detective saw the blow coming and met it halfway.

He caught the swinging wrist, twisted it, wheeled around and drew it down sharply across his shoulder, bent forward, exerted his strength, jerked—and sent Turnieff flying over his head and over the low iron fence near where they stood, so that the Russian landed on the soft green sod beyond it.

It was a jujutsu trick that the detective made use of, and although it badly jarred the recipient of it, the man was not injured.

Turnieff leaped to his feet again with a cry of rage, and with a curse on his lips rushed forward toward the fence which separated them.

But the fence stopped him, and so did Nick Carter, for he reached out one hand and seized the Russian by the collar and held him so, pulling him tightly up against the iron pickets in such a way that he could not escape.

And he held him there.

"Don't be an ass, Turnieff!" he said. "I am in the humor just now to box somebody's ears, and yours would serve as well as another's. What is the matter with you, anyhow? Why did you attack me?"

"Release me if you are not a coward!" stormed Turnieff.

"I'm not a coward; neither will I release you. Big as you are, Turnieff, you are only a child in my grasp. You must realize that now. Why did you attack me?"

"You insulted the countess, you——"

"There, there, now! Colonel Turnieff, I have never insulted a woman in my life, much less one who was my hostess. Did she say that I insulted her? Did she tell you that?"

"No; but her actions——"

"Ah! Her actions. I see. You have no other reason for attacking me than what you saw in the conservatory?"

"No; but that was sufficient, heaven knows."

"My dear fellow, you have been misled. The countess was offended, I'll admit; but it was because I would not do things which no man of honor could do; not because I affronted her in any manner, for I did not. Do you believe me?"

"No."

"Turnieff, if I did not feel a certain degree of pity for you, I would chuck you back on the grass and leave you. As it is, I am sorry for you. You have been endeavoring to hate this woman whom you believe killed your father, or caused his death, and instead you are in love with her. You have gone into her presence time after time, deceiving yourself into the idea that you were seeking vengeance, when in reality you were only a moth playing around a flame which

unless you break away, will consume you utterly. Believe me, it is true."

"Release me, I say! Let me go."

"What will you do if I let you go?"

"I will strike you in the face to discover if there is any fight in you."

"Listen to me a moment, colonel, and then I will let you go. Do you realize that I am now in the service of your country, and am acting under the direct commands of your ambassador? Do you understand that you are jeopardizing your whole career at this moment? If I should report to the ambassador what you have done, you would be sent back to St. Petersburg at once. For what are you so conducting yourself?"

The man struggled fiercely, but Nick Carter held him; and the detective saw that he was coming to his senses, too.

"I shall release you now, Turnieff," he said, and suited the action to the word. "There is a gate yonder; pass through it. We will walk down the avenue together while we talk. I only hope for your own sake that no person has seen this affair."

But Turnieff did not reply. Neither did he follow the advice of the detective and go to the gate. He stood quite still, staring at Nick, evidently impressed by what had been said to him, but too stubborn to do as was suggested.

And Nick, half disgusted by all of the events of the night, turned away.

"I shall say nothing of this affair to the ambassador," he said. "From me, he will be made no wiser concerning what has occurred between you and me tonight, and I advise you to be silent on the subject, also. In the morning when your temper has cooled, we will discuss it. Good night."

He moved on down the thoroughfare, which happened to be Connecticut Avenue.

Turnieff stung to madness by the coolness, not unmixed with contempt of the detective, leaped the pickets of the iron fence and rushed after him.

"You will fight. I will make you fight," he exclaimed. "If you won't meet me as gentlemen should meet, then have it this way," and he struck wildly at the detective again.

Nick turned in time to ward off the blow, but not soon enough to prevent the savage rush of the Russian having its effect.

For Turnieff was no weakling, although Nick Carter was greatly the stronger of the two. The Russian clinched, winding his long arms around the detective's body with such tenacity that it was all that Nick could do to escape the consequences of it.

They struggled for a moment there in the middle of the sidewalk; but at the end of that moment Nick threw Turnieff away from him with such force that the man staggered backward, and finally fell to his knees on the cement flagging.

As he did so three men rushed forward out of the darkness, coming apparently from nowhere, for Nick had not suspected their nearness.

They reached the fallen man ere he could get upon his feet and they seized upon him, evidently to assist him—that was how Nick regarded their intentions.

As they grasped Turnieff, as if to assist him to his feet, the Russian uttered a sharp cry; he collapsed in their hands; something fell to the pavement with a clatter; and then one of the three men cried out in accents of horror:

"Good heaven, the fellow has stabbed him! The man has been stabbed!"

They dropped their burden and rushed at Nick. As if by magic, two more men appeared, and they also rushed forward. They surrounded the detective—and he, taken entirely unawares, startled by the accusation that had been made, was seized by them before he realized what had happened.

Then, as the five men lifted their voices in outcries of "Murder!" "Help!" "Police!" and kindred words, Nick Carter's wit told him what must be the explanation of the scene. He realized that he would be a helpless member of the community indeed if he should be caught there in such a predicament with these five witnesses against him.

Instantly he laid about him with his arms and fists. He called into play every ounce of strength that he possessed. He scattered those five men about him as if they were so many straws. He piled them into a heap beside the fallen Turnieff—and then he permitted discretion to control him, and, hearing answering shouts of men approaching, he tore himself loose finally and fled.

Under the circumstances, as he now understood them, it was the only thing to do.

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## CHAPTER X.

### MURDER.

All Washington was excited the following morning, anent the murder of Colonel Alexis Turnieff.

There were extras of the morning papers on the

streets, in which the full particulars were given, and summed up into one paragraph, an epitome of the accounts of the crime was about like this:

Turnieff had been one of the guests at the reception given last night by Countess Narnine, at her home in [illegible] Street. There had been another guest there who had arrived and departed within less than an hour. That guest had been seen by many persons, but was not personally known to any of them save the countess herself. That he passed under the name of Carter, was admitted, but no first name was given, and the countess asserted that she did not remember it. It was said that the man called Carter had in some way given offense to the countess, although she utterly refused to discuss that point with any person. It was sufficient, however, that she had asked him to leave her house, and a servant had shown the man to the door.

Colonel Alexis Turnieff, supposed to have been a witness to the affront offered the countess and avowedly in love with her, although hopelessly so, had followed the stranger from the house. The two had met in the street outside; there had been words and a hand-to-hand struggle. At the end of it, Turnieff had fallen to the pavement, stabbed to the heart, and he had never spoken again.

Three men—their names were given—passing along the avenue at the opposite side had seen the beginning and the end of the struggle. At first they had not thought to interfere, but finally had rushed forward, just at the moment when Turnieff had fallen, stabbed to death by the man with whom he had been fighting.

Even then the three men had not suspected what had happened. They supposed that Turnieff had merely been knocked down and had rushed to his assistance; but on attempting to lift him to his feet, they discovered that he had received his death wound.

They had called for help. Two other men, unknown to them till then, had rushed to their assistance, and the five together had endeavored to hold the murderer. But the strength of the man had proven to be prodigious. He had torn himself away from them. He had piled them into a heap upon the pavement. He had made his escape.

Then other men came to the rescue, among them two policemen. They had pursued the murderer; but that terrible man had made good his escape and disappeared.

The city was being scoured for him. Every nook and corner of it was being searched. A fairly good description of him had been obtained, and the chief of police gave it as his opinion that the fellow would quickly be apprehended.

In the meantime the "murderer"—that terrible fellow who had thrown five men into an ignominious heap on the pavement *had* made good his escape, although for a time it seemed that it might be impossible for him to do so.

Nick Carter had never been in quite such a predicament as that one, and he realized on the instant that he decided to run for it, that his reputation would not save him. His life, or at least his liberty, would be sworn away by those five hired assassins who had taken advantage of the opportunity offered to rid the principals who hired them, of a man who had become obnoxious.

For so Nick Carter read the truth of the incident.

Doubtless the life of Turnieff had already been sworn away by the spies of that unnamed country, which, for the purpose of this story, had been called Siam, but which, of course, was not Siam.

Doubtless it had already been decreed that Turnieff should die that night, after he came away from the reception at the home of the countess. More than likely the five men who appeared so opportunely for their own purposes upon the scene would have murdered the Russian anyway, before he reached his own home. In the quarrel with Nick Carter they had seen an opportunity not only to accomplish what they had been ordered to do, but to cast the blame of it upon another.

Nick regarded it merely as a coincidence that that other should have been himself. He did not associate the murder with that other incident of the night, at the house of the countess. He did not connect her with it, although there were moments when he thought of doing so.

The thing that the crime did tell the detective was this: That Turnieff had been in some way instrumental in the theft of the tin cylinder with its contents, from the house of the ambassador, and that his usefulness was over. Considering him a weakling who might at any time betray them, he had been sacrificed.

And yet—the matter was most opportune.

There was always the possibility that the countess had seen in Turnieff's anger at Nick Carter for the supposed affront an opportunity of ridding herself of two dangerous men—Turnieff and Nick Carter.

But Nick knew that even if he could ultimately establish his own innocence, there was sure to be much

inconvenience and trouble connected with it. He realized when he saw through the thing that the best way for him to do was to get out of sight, and to keep out of sight until he could clear up the mystery and apprehend the real murderers.

That was why he ran away.

That was why, after he had made good his escape, he directed his steps straight for the embassy and roused the ambassador from his slumbers.

For the detective had been provided with a means of entering that house at any hour of the day or night without calling upon the servants to admit him. When he entered it that night, he took himself straight to the room where the big teester bed was located, and where the ambassador slept.

Nobody saw the detective enter the house; nobody but the ambassador was aware of his presence there; and Nick's first words to the Russian were a shock to him. He said:

"Turnieff has been sacrificed, prince. I do not know that he is dead, but I fear that he is."

"My God!" cried the ambassador.

And then with deliberation Nick recounted all that occurred at the house of the countess, the quarrel in the street that followed it—and the crime.

"You had the forethought to escape," said the ambassador, when he was able to speak after he had heard the story. "Heavens, Mr. Carter, think of the fix you would be in if you had been captured."

The detective smiled, though sadly.

"I have thought of it," he said. "I thought of it then, and I had to think very quickly, too. On the whole, I believe that those men were not sorry to have me get away from them, since it saved them the necessity of swearing away the life of an innocent man; although I have very little idea that they would have hesitated at that."

"Hesitated? Not at all. Poor Turnieff! First the father; now the son. It is awful! But, Mr. Carter, I see men fall about me all the time. The life of a man is not considered where the schemes of a government are at stake. What a terrible woman!"

"Eh? Why do you say that, prince?"

"Because there can be no doubt, not the slightest, that she set those men upon you."

The detective shook his head in a positive negative.

"No," he said, "I do not think so."

"You do not? Why not?"

"For several reason, the chief one being because it would have been bad policy on her part. Then there are minor reasons. For example, there was not time for her to arrange it. She could not know that I would stop on the corner near her house, puzzled by the experiences of the night, and that Turnieff would overtake me there. For if I had not stopped there for five minutes or more, he would not have found me and there would have been no quarrel."

"And he would still be among the living."

"No; I do not think so."

"You do not? Why?"

"Prince, hasn't it occurred to you that in order that this affair could happen just as it did, those men must have been there on the watch?"

"Yes. But——"

"Wait. If they were there on the watch, they saw me leave the house, did they not?"

"Supposedly so."

"Well, they permitted me to go my way unmolested. If they had received instructions concerning me, they would hardly have done that. No, they were watching and waiting for Turnieff, intending that he should die—intending to kill him. I had no place in that plot. It was hatched—it must have been—without considering me, and only because they deemed it expedient to get him out of the way. He would have been killed just the same—only it would have been a mysterious crime, and no person would have been directly charged with it."

"I see what you mean."

"If I had not stopped at that corner, where I remained certainly five minutes if not longer before Turnieff overtook me, he would not have found me at all. I should have gone around the next corner."

"Perhaps you are right; and yet——"

"Well?"

"It does look to me like the work of that woman's craft."

"It looks so on the face of it; yes. But when one stops to analyze it, it does not. She could not have arranged it in the time allowed, even if it had occurred to her—and honestly, I do not think that she knew of the attack that was to be made on Turnieff. It was necessary that she should have known of that in order to have involved me in it."

"You are defending her, Carter."

"No; I am merely being just to her."

"But poor Turnieff is dead, and he has been killed by the men with whom she is working."

"We surmise that; but we do not know it. Even if it is so, it does not follow that she is in any way

accountable for his murder, or that she knew that it was decreed."

"I think it does. Anyhow I shall act on that belief."

"As you please, prince."

"But, Carter, what are you to do now?"

"I am to work this case out to the end, I believe; and incidentally, I shall seek and find the men who murdered Turnieff, and who would have charged me with the crime."

"Good. I believe you will do it. But how? You are a suspected man, Carter. You cannot go abroad in the streets now as you would have done. The papers will be filled with talk about you."

"I know it. I am anxious to see them. But I shall go about in the streets just the same, prince. I have not studied the art of disguising myself for nothing. Really, the case has just begun."

## CHAPTER XI.

### BARE-FACED JIMMY'S DOUBLE.

Nick Carter, after he escaped from his pursuers that night, and could take it more easily for the remainder of the distance he wished to go, had thought deeply. Even before he had the interview which followed with the ambassador, he had determined upon his future course of action.

Since Turnieff had been murdered, evidently in cold blood, and merely to get rid of him, the detective was convinced that the Russian colonel had been the real instrument in the theft of the tin cylinder and its contents.

Whether Juno had engineered and directed the affair or not was a mere incident in the matter. There was no longer any doubt in the mind of Nick Carter that Turnieff had been the really guilty one.

And that Turnieff had had it in his power to betray those whom he had served in performing the act—and might have done so, if driven to it—was sufficient cause for his untimely taking off, from the standpoint of those who had ordered his assassination.

Again Turnieff was really the only person who could have had access to the sleeping room of the ambassador, and who could have gone through the corridors of the house toward it, or have returned through them from it, without exciting suspicion. After all, the ambassador had been wiser than he realized in directing the detective to study the man thoroughly and well.

But Juno, "The Leopard," where was she in the matter?

During that conversation with Nick in the conservatory, she had said enough to make it plain to him that she was really in the service of that country which they had agreed to call Siam.

Practically she had admitted as much when she charged him with being in the employ of Russia.

Nevertheless, Nick could not bring himself to the belief that she had taken any part in the assassination of Turnieff, actively or passively, or that she had knowledge of the intention to kill him.

He believed that in that respect she had been maligned. He believed the statements she had made in regard to herself at the time of that conservatory conversation, and he looked upon her now as not half so bad as she had been painted, or as she had permitted others to believe her.

Her conduct toward him when she drove him away from her home left no sting after it, for, after all, that was part of the game, and it was up to her to take all the tricks she could take. Aside from the assassination, Nick had a notion that the country Juno was serving had more of right on its side than Russia did.

Nevertheless, Nick had pledged himself to recover those secret documents for the ambassador, and he meant to do so; and now that Turnieff had been killed, he had promised himself that the assassins should be caught.

"Whether Juno is the person sought in this case or not, she is the real key to the situation," he told himself; and believing that, he made arrangements for the next move.

He had determined now to move quickly. The murder of Turnieff should not go unpunished, nor would he consent that he should himself be thought guilty of such a crime if it could be avoided.

By the time he had finished his talk with the ambassador, morning had come; and the ambassador, at the detective's request, arose much earlier than usual, and went forth to make some purchases for Nick, since it was not safe at that time to trust another with the errand.

The things he wanted were the necessities for the disguise he had determined to wear when night should fall again, and in the meantime he intended to keep

very quiet indeed within the house of the ambassador.

When the prince returned with the articles needed, he brought with him several of the morning papers, and Nick learned from their contents the exact status of affairs at that time. After he had discussed the matter to some further extent with the ambassador, he shut himself in a room and began to make the transformation in his appearance which now seemed so necessary.

"Once there was a man who called himself Bare-Faced Jimmy," he said to himself with a smile as he regarded his own reflection in the mirror of the room, "and now I shall proceed to bring that man—although he is in Sing Sing prison at the present moment—into this room for my especial benefit."*

Bare-Faced Jimmy Duryea, alias Howard Drummond, alias Ledger Dinwiddie, had been largely in the experience of the detective during the last few months; once, also, Jimmy had been the husband of Juno; and what was quite as important in what the detective meant now to do and perform, Jimmy had knowledge of the history of "The Leopard." That was why the detective had determined to make use of Jimmy.

Much had been said about the ability of Nick Carter in the way of disguises. It was an art that his father had taught him, and which he had studied in all its branches ever since then, at every time and place where opportunity offered. One of the things that Nick Carter could do, and do well, was to make himself like another person, provided that stature and physical development were approximately the same.

Nick's first occupation in arranging the present disguise was to make a careful drawing of Jimmy, and this, when he began to manufacture the actual disguise, he pinned against the wall beside the mirror.

We need not to go into detail. Nick's methods have been described too often to render that necessary; but he worked on and on, using the articles which the ambassador had purchased for him, and ultimately he was perfectly satisfied with the result.

Still he took no chances. He did not go upon the street until after night had fallen, and he used up the afternoon in obtaining some needed rest and sleep.

But midnight found him on the streets of the city. He entered several places where, if he had not worn the disguise, the description published concerning him would have drawn attention to him. As it was—well, he was safer in the streets of Washington than he would have been in New York, for the reason that more than one cop would have looked at him there and would have supposed him to be Jimmy Duryea at liberty again.

Midnight found the detective in the vicinity of the home of Juno, Countess Narnine. He studied the dwelling for a time, and then walked away from it, satisfied that he would have no difficulty in carrying his design into execution.

He satisfied himself on another point also, and that was that Juno was not only at home, but that she had denied herself to all callers; for he saw several persons approach the door of her home, only to be turned away again by the servants.

"I shouldn't wonder if the murder of Turnieff and the hue and cry after me, as a consequence of the crime, has got on her nerves," he told himself.

At two in the morning he was back again near the house. This time, watching for his opportunity, he sprang over the fence, for the house was a detatched one, crept through the shrubbery, and presently approached a side door which he had selected for the beginning of his operations.

He did not know that, during his absence between midnight and two o'clock, three men had called there, had been admitted, and were even at that moment in consultation with Juno in the library of her home.

Perhaps, if he had known it, it would only have rendered him the more eager to proceed with the undertaking in hand; at all events, he did go ahead with it.

It consisted, first, in using his picklock upon that side door; a small instrument of his own invention of which he often had occasion to make use.

A chain bolt inside the door was quickly snipped through by nippers he had brought with him for that purpose, and he stood inside the home of Juno shortly after two o'clock in the morning.

His pocket flashlight showed him the way around. He pressed the button of it long enough to determine his course, and went ahead slowly and cautiously, and so he arrived in the main hallway at the front of the house, from which point he knew his way fairly well.

There was more light burning in the hall than he had expected to find there, and he decided that Juno might not have retired as yet. As he bent his head to listen he could plainly hear the murmur of voices from some place not far away, which he rightly judged to be the library.

*Read all about Bare-Faced Jimmy in the two preceding numbers of NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

Nick knew the location of the library from his visit to the house the preceding night. He knew that it communicated with one of the parlors of the house which was directly in front of it, and so he passed through the hall to the parlor door and entered that room.

At once the voices became more distinct, though as yet he could not determine words of the conversation. He crept forward and drew the heavy curtain a trifle aside from the doorway that connected the two rooms.

As he did so, he started back so suddenly that he almost betrayed himself, for Juno at that moment, expressing something about the closeness of the room, left her chair, came directly toward him, and with a quick motion pulled the curtain all the way back.

It was a miracle that she did not discover him, but she did not, and Nick understood the reason why. It was because she was greatly exercised with the matter she had in hand at the moment.

She wheeled about where she stood, facing the others in the room, who were seated at a table whereon were bottles, glasses, and cigars. There were three men there, and Juno faced them from the curtained doorway, standing with one of her hands still grasping the curtain. She was angry. Nick could see that at once.

"There is absolutely no use in discussing the matter further," she told them in a tone which was emphatic. "I will not countenance what has happened, and I will have nothing more to do with you or with your crowd of assassins. You may go your ways. That is final. I am sorry that I ever came here at all."

"Beware, my purring leopard," said one of the men in reply, with a short and not pleasant laugh. "You may find that you call us assassins to some purpose."

"You threaten me?" she demanded, her lips curling with contempt.

"Yes, countess, I threaten you."

"You would murder me, doubtless, as you murdered poor Turnieff."

"Very likely," replied the man coolly. "Very certainly, if you defy us."

"Bah! As if I feared you! You—was it you who struck the blow, Delorme? Was it you who stabbed Turnieff to death? You would stab me also; eh?"

"Yes. It was I. His death was necessary, and if it should happen that you were in the way, my fair one, you could die quite as easily."

She laughed at him deliberately, mockingly. She bent forward toward him, still holding her grasp upon the curtain.

"You are a brute and a coward, Maurice Delorme!" she exclaimed. "But—have you forgotten the tin cylinder with its contents? What would you do without that? Offer to do me the least harm, and I will return it to the Russian ambassador."

"By heaven, you shall give it up now!" cried Delorme, leaping to his feet and starting toward her; but he had not taken the second step in that direction, when Juno was seized from behind, pulled backward through the open doorway and Maurice Delorme found himself facing a man instead of a woman. The man was coolly pointing a pistol at his heart and commanding him to throw up his hands or take the consequences.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### A GOOD NIGHT'S WORK.

Nick Carter had not anticipated any such development as this, when he determined to enter the house of the Countess Narnine as a burglar would. He had intended, then, merely to personate Jimmy, to surprise Juno, and if possible to force a confession of some sort from her.

But here was a gathering of the very men he wanted to find, at her house. And here she was resenting what they had done in murdering the Russian officer; defying them to their faces, and admitting in his hearing that she could place her hand upon the papers he was seeking. And more, here was the confessed murderer of Turnieff, with two of his accomplices.

Nor would Nick have interrupted the scene just when he did had he not realized the necessity of immediate action.

He had seen enough to know that Delorme was ugly, and to understand that the man was quite capable of killing Juno then and there.

Indeed, Delorme afterward confessed that the countess would not have lived a moment longer had Nick Carter not appeared when he did.

Nick saw the flame in the man's eyes; he saw the temper the fellow was in. The detective realized that he must act at once, and so he snatched Juno out of danger, whipped out his own weapons and took her place, getting the "drop" on all of the three men at once.

And they did not know him.

Had he been Nick Carter in proper person, they

would have done so; but in his character of Bare-Faced Jimmy, he was a stranger to them.

More than that, when he seized Juno, dragged her back away from Delorme, and took her place, they heard her cry out in evident consternation:

*"Jimmy!"*

They were frightened.

They did not dare to move, and doubtless they supposed that it would be possible to temporize.

In obedience to the stern command that the detective uttered, they raised their hands high above their heads and held them there, staring. The two revolvers he held, one in either hand, with the muzzles wavering from one to another and keeping each of them constantly covered, confirmed a sufficiently convincing argument.

"Juno?" said Nick without turning his head, and for the moment forgetting to imitate the voice of James Duryea.

She stared for a moment without replying. Then she moved forward until she stood near him, still staring.

"Yes?" she replied. And then as if impelled by a second thought she added: "What is it, Jimmy?"

Nick chuckled. He knew from the manner of her reply that he had already betrayed himself, but that she preferred to accept the deception as fact. Then he spoke calmly.

"I want you to know," he said, still keeping the pistols wavering so that they covered all three of the men, "that I believe all that you said to me in that last interview we had. And now will you help me to do something? Will you, Juno?"

"Yes. I will help. You want me to disarm those men?"

"Yes. Tell them that you know me; that if they make the slightest move I'll drop every one of them with a bullet; not dead, you understand; just maimed. I'll shoot one knee out from under each one of them. Now go ahead, Juno. Be careful there, mister man, you who are called Maurice Delorme.

"You look ugly and you would commit murder if you had an opportunity; but you won't get one. Did you ever happen to hear of Bare-Faced Jimmy, the gentleman burglar? Well, that's me. I came here just in time, didn't I? I happened to see you—all three of you—when you killed that Russian colonel last night, so you didn't have to make that confession we just heard. Have you got 'em all, Juno?"

"Yes."

"Every one of them? Are you sure that you have not overlooked a knife or a pistol, or a bottle of acid, or poison?"

"Quite sure," she smiled back at him.

"Good! Now, my festive assassins, turn around. Your backs are more agreeable than your faces. That's right. Juno, take one of these pistols; I'll keep the other. Now, you three cutthroats, stand still. If you move it means a broken knee for each of you. Juno, I regret the necessity for taking down some of these pictures on the walls, but I need the wire."

Five minutes after that, bound hand and foot with wire picture cord, the three men were lying on their back on the floor of the library. Then, and not till then, Juno stepped forward demurely and gave the pistol back to Nick Carter.

"We will leave those fellows where they are for the present, Juno," the detective said. "They can't get away. That wire cord is too strong for them, and I am too good an expert in its use. Have you another room to which you can take me, countess?"

"Yes," she replied. "Come with me."

He followed her and she led him through the hall and up the broad stairway to the parlor of her own private suite. There she turned about and faced him.

"Why did you make yourself so like Jimmy?" she demanded. It was the last thing he expected her to say.

"Because I realized the necessity of another interview with you, and because I thought that for a few moments at least I could deceive you."

"You might have done so indeed, for a moment; but not for long. But why did you wish to do it?"

"Juno, every wish that I had was built upon the desire to recover possession of the tin cylinder, which I was sure you held in your possession. To-night I have heard you admit that you have it. I want it, Juno."

"Suppose I should refuse it?"

"In that case I would keep on searching till I discovered it; that is all."

She came a step nearer to him.

"You saved my life to-night, Nick Carter. Do you realize that? That man would have killed me. You appeared on the scene just in time."

"That is why I appeared," he replied.

"I owe you something for that, my friend. But first of all, I owe you an apology—for what I said and did when you were here at my reception. Will you forgive me?"

"Oh, that is all in the game, Juno. I think I admired you when you did it. It was a very plucky thing to do."

"No. That is a mistake. It was not a plucky thing to do; it was a despicable thing for me to do. Will you forgive it? Say yes, if you mean it."

"Yes. Wholly. Entirely. And now——"

"Before we refer to the tin cylinder and the papers it contains, will you do me a favor, please?" she interrupted him.

"I think so. What is it?"

"That door opens into a lavatory. Go in there and remove the disguise. Let me talk to you as Nick Carter; not as what you appear to be."

Without a word he turned away. Five minutes later he was back again, and stood before her with not a trace of the disguise left upon him. He noticed that she was holding in one of her hands the tin cylinder about which so much had been done, and which had been the cause of so many things happening.

With only a few words of comment, she placed it in his hands.

"Take it," she said. "I hate it and all that is connected with it. Somehow I feel as if I were responsible for the death of poor Turnieff, although I swear to you——"

"You need not, Juno. I am already convinced of that much."

"But I had nothing to do with the theft of it. I did not even ask him to get it for me or if it was in his power to get it. Once I did mention those papers to him, and say that if I could get possession of them my fortune would be made. Then one day he brought them to me—and I hated him for it; hated him for the weakling he was. I did not come here in the service of that country that wanted the papers. It was only after I arrived here that I was induced to take part in their affairs; but I swear to you that I have never done one single thing for them, or abetted one of their acts, which could reflect upon me in the slightest degree. Oh, please believe me, Nick Carter."

"I do believe you, Juno."

"One more thing and I have done. I want to swear to you again that I had nothing to do with the death of Turnieff's father. Maurice Delorme did that, too, I believe, although I do not know. The money and the jewels that were stolen from the old prince I never saw out of his possession, although I think that Delorme could explain about that part of it, too. And now, now——"

She turned her back to him for a moment, and he waited. After a little she turned about again, and raising her head proudly, asked:

"What are you going to do with me?"

"I am going to give you a bit of advice, Juno; that is all. It is that you give up the life of an international spy, and of a diplomatic agent, and live the life that will make you happy. That is all. There is nothing against you. But you must not forget that there is a man in Sing Sing prison who is your husband, and who——"

"Stop! He is not my husband. He was not even my lover. He was never anything to me, save only that I helped him to steal a name, and I promised him that if he made good and became a good man, some day I might marry him. Believe me, Jimmy was never anything to me—more than I hope you are—a friend. It is the truth, and the whole truth.

"Do you believe me?"

"Yes."

After a time she asked him:

"What will you do with those men downstairs, Nick Carter?"

"I have been thinking about that," he replied to her. "It would not do for them to be taken to jail from your home. I will telephone for the ambassador from here. He will send a closed carriage. We will bundle these men into it—and, unless I greatly mistake, he will know how to handle the situation."

And the ambassador did know.

Just how it was done nobody ever discovered, but the men made a full confession, and ultimately they suffered the extreme penalty of the law in such cases.

Another thing: Bare-Faced Jimmy Duryea, with the many aliases, died that same night in the prison where he was confined.

THE END.

In next week's story Nick Carter shows much of the marvelous cleverness that first won for him his great reputation. All his talents as a detective are aroused to action by a murder-mystery case. It is intensely interesting to follow him as he directs all his energies to a well-defined object, and puzzles over a problem that seems impossible to solve. How he discovers and brings to light an amazing plot, that has been planned for years, makes a lively tale that keeps you on the jump through every chapter. It is called "The Dead Letter; or, Nick Carter's Postal Clue." Out next week in No. 719. You'd better make sure of getting this bully good yarn.

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# A YANKEE PILOT.

In the memorable year of 1776, after General Howe had been driven out of Boston by Washington, he embarked with his army on board the British fleet in the harbor, which, after a few days, sailed, leaving behind them three or four men-of-war as a sort of blockade of the port. It was some months before the Americans succeeded in driving these ships from their anchorage.

While the English cruisers were anchored in the neighborhood of Nantasket and Point Alderton, occasional expeditions of a character which may be designated as trifling when the main result of the hostilities is considered, were undertaken by those on board. It is in relation to one of these matters that our sketch will be confined, premising, however, that the circumstances were of actual occurrence.

The town of Eastham is situated upon the peninsula of Cape Cod, about seventy miles from Boston, in a southeast direction, and was a place of considerable maritime importance a hundred years ago, when the struggle for American independence first commenced, a specialty in which it still maintans its character.

As we have intimated, the British were very fond of fitting out small expeditions for the annoyance of the towns upon the Cape, and occasionally these rose to no little importance, as was the case when they destroyed the town of Falmouth.

In Eastham was a well-known individual named Captain Noyes, whose business was to act as a pilot anywhere in Massachusetts Bay, but who devoted a portion of his time also to fishing as a means of supporting his young family. On these occasions he would make a long reach out to sea with his little, half-decked boat, taking his eldest son with him, a lad of fifteen.

Captain Noyes was a true-hearted patriot and a brave man. He had already commanded several small crafts in expeditions against the enemy, and had brought in one very valuable prize—no less than a British storeship, with arms and ammunition designed for General Howe's army besieged in Boston.

On one of his fishing excursions Captain Noyes found himself off Provincetown Point—or, to make it perhaps still clearer to the general reader, off the extreme headland of Cape Cod. He was slowly drifting with the tide, and fishing, when it suddenly came on to blow, and he was compelled to make everything snug on board his little craft, reef down his one sail, and seek a lee under the land at Race Point. As he ran into Cape Cod Bay he was overtaken by a small schooner of about a hundred tons, apparently a coast fisherman.

The schooner had no sooner doubled the headland of Race Point than it ran so close to Captain Noyes' boat as to hail him. There seemed to be but three men on board, one of whom asked Noyes if he could pilot them hereabouts, and said they were strangers from Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Noyes ranged up alongside and told the man who hailed him that he was a pilot, and could do so.

"Heave us your painter and come on board then," said the man in the schooner.

"Aye, aye," replied Noyes, and soon after he was on board the schooner with his boy.

No sooner had he got fairly over the bulwarks, however, than he discovered that he had been cheated, for there came up from the cabin at the same moment an officer wearing a lieutenant's uniform of the British service, and nearly a dozen seamen, who had remained out of sight until now, appeared upon the deck of the schooner.

Noyes was too well-posted not to understand the meaning of all this at a glance.

He had been trapped.

The seeming fishing schooner had been captured somewhere along shore and fitted up to do all the mischief she could among the small craft that ventured about in Massachusetts Bay.

As afterward appeared, she had taken two fishing vessels, one off Gloucester and one off Marblehead, both of which she had burned after taking out of them whatever it was thought worth while to save.

She had on board a lieutenant in command, a boatswain and twelve seamen.

Her armament was a couple of six-pound swivels and the proper material to serve them.

Noyes' practiced eyes took in these matters at once, but in the meantime it was coming on to blow "big guns," and the schooner was one of those little craft known to the New England coast fifty and a hundred years ago, sharp at the stern as at the bows, called Pink sterns. These little vessels were very weatherly when properly handled, but the young British officer had never sailed in one before the present time.

No doubt he could have handled a sloop of war easier than he could manage that little New England shore craft.

In the course of half an hour the stiff breeze had ripened into a regular gale, and the lieutenant, calling Noyes into the cabin, took out a chart of Cape Cod Bay, and asked him where they could make a harbor.

"Either shore," said the pilot. "We are in the middle of the bay."

"The wind is hereaway, north and east," said the lieutenant.

"Exactly."

"Well, what do you advise, pilot? It's getting pretty rough for this frail craft."

"We might run into Plymouth, or on the opposite side of the bay to Wellfleet."

"No, no, that won't do. I want to go into some quiet place to ride out the gale."

"Let me see," said Noyes.

"Isn't there some creek along shore away from the towns?" asked the officer.

"We might make Brant Point," said Noyes. "That's lonely enough."

"We'll try it, then—there's no time to lose."

The pilot took the helm and gave his orders as to trimming the sail. Noyes knew very well that the schooner couldn't ride out a northeaster at Brant Point, but on they bowled, dragging his own boat astern.

The schooner was not long after brought to anchor at the Point, but the storm increased as the night came on, until the schooner lurched and pitched in such a fashion that it was very plain she could not hold together long in that position.

"This will never do, pilot," said the lieutenant. "We shall be thrown ashore and go to pieces if we don't get away from here."

"I've been thinking so," said Noyes.

"Shall we heave up anchor?"

"Yes, if you can," said the pilot.

The order was given, and in a little while the schooner, under a double-reefed mainsail and jib, was got with her head off the land and worked out into the bay.

"Where now?" asked the lieutenant.

"I'll run under the lee of Billingsgate Point, and see if we can't ride easier there."

"Very good."

It was with considerable difficulty that the little craft was worked to an anchorage under Billingsgate Point in the teeth of the gale, but at last the anchor was let go, and the crew and the lieutenant were completely wet through, as well as being thoroughly exhausted by their extraordinary exertions.

Here the schooner rode more quietly, and all hands turned in, leaving the pilot and his son to keep the watch on deck, with a couple of foremast hands. It was not long before every soul was fast asleep except Noyes, who began to explore the schooner very quietly, even going boldly into the cabin, where he found a small arms chest, and secured half a dozen brass pocket pistols, and some balls and powder.

In the hold—he carried a ship's lantern with him—he discovered, in a small locker, a barrel of New England rum. Finding also a gallon measure, he drew it full and brought it up to the crowded forecastle where the men were sleeping. He shook one of the seamen, and said:

"Boys, I've had my drink, and I think I needed it after such a tough time. Have some?"

Who ever knew a sailor to refuse rum at sea? One after another woke up, and that gallon measure was three times renewed by Noyes, and as quickly emptied by the thirsty sailors. He also took care to supply the two men on deck as liberally as those off watch, priming them up until they could neither see nor stand.

He now loaded his pistols, woke up his son, and, explaining his plan to him, gave him two of the weapons and told him not to use them unless he gave the order. The wind had hauled to the westward a point or two. With the help of his son, Noyes managed to hoist just enough of the mainsail to catch a cap full of the strong wind, and a couple of rings of the jib. This done, he cut loose the anchor hawser, and the schooner began to drift instantly to the eastward across the bay.

Noyes was at the helm.

He knew what he was about. He told his son to hammer the end of the hawser where it had been cut so as to make it appear as though it had been severed by a strain and not by the knife. This was done as a precaution.

There was hardly sail enough on the schooner to give her steerage way, but Noyes did guide her with the helm until she drifted over Eastham bar just as daylight fairly broke. He knew every inch of the harbor, and steered through the channel until he got the schooner just opposite the town, where he ran her aground hard and fast.

Of course this created quite a shock.

Up tumbled the lieutenant, but the moment he appeared above the hatchway he was seized from behind by Noyes, who, with his son, tied his arms securely behind him, at the same time threatening to blow his brains out if he offered any resistance. This threat, being backed by the sight of a pistol aimed at his face, was altogether too convincing an argument not to be heeded.

"Where are we?" asked the lieutenant.

"In Eastham harbor."

"How did we get across the bay?"

"By wind and sail," said Noyes.

He then led the British officer below, and locked him up in the little cabin.

One by one he handcuffed the drunken sailors with irons found in the arms chest, and the boatswain, who woke up during the operation, was also tied to a stanchion so as to make him perfectly secure.

In the meantime the day had fully broken, and the villagers, discovering the strange schooner, were flocking to the shore.

Noyes signaled them, and a boat load soon came off to his assistance.

"Pilot," asked the lieutenant, "how did you get all my men drunk?"

"With that cask of rum."

"What cask?"

"Did you know of it?"

"No."

"Well, there was one in the hold, and, looking round, I happened to find it. That's all."

The prisoners were landed in safety, and properly confined at Eastham until orders were received from General Ward, then in command at Boston, as to their disposition.

The schooner was easily floated from her bed at high tide. She was found uninjured, and became the sole property of Captain Noyes, who had so very successfully captured her and her crew.

So bloodless and satisfactory a capture had not occurred along the coast in many a long day, where a pilot and his son brought in a vessel and thirteen prisoners of war without bloodshed.

The story of the Yankee pilot, Captain Noyes, of Cape Cod, was often told on shipboard during the struggle between the American Colonies and the mother country, which finally ended in our independence.

## CAUGHT NAPPING.

I met old Jean Rachot in St. Louis one day in June, and we had a pleasant time, as one may well imagine who is informed that we were old wilderness friends, who had trapped together around the headwaters of the Yellowstone, stood on the great northern divide between the Pacific, flowing waters and those that came to the Gulf, had been once corraled for ten days by the murderous Blackfeet, and got off with the loss of half our party, for which loss we had a credit of twenty scalps when we got back at last to the trading post of our company.

We spent the day talking over old times, while I helped him in trading, for he had come down to buy clothes, Indian trinkets, and some farm tools.

He and his pretty squaw wife had settled on Cache Creek, beyond all the other settlements, and were ranching a little, raising stock a good deal, and keeping the goodwill of the Indians around them by doing some fair trading, and making now and then a big feast, when the chiefs were conciliated and pleased with a few presents.

Jean was thus able to keep his herds of cattle and horses free from the hands of Indan robbers—in fact, the Sioux, by whom he was surrounded, were a very fair guard against any party of Utes on the one side, or Pawnees on the other, that might try to make a raid on Rachot's wealth.

We went to Bates' Theatre that night, met F. X. Aubrey, and had a jolly time, ending in a supper at my quarters, then, and for a long time the old Planters' Hotel. Before we parted the old trapper got a promise that I'd visit him on his ranch and have an elk hunt up in the Black Hills with him. We had both killed buffalo enough to have lost taste for that fun, and an elk hunt would have a new excitement in it.

In pursuance of that promise, in the following September I "went West," and just six weeks after I left St. Louis, Rachot, a half-breed son of his, wilder than a Sioux brave, and myself, with each a good hunting horse under us, and a dozen more for packs and reserve, were away up on the Sweet Water, having our own fun among the elks.

We were hunting right along the "old trail," as the route first taken in California overland emigration was called, and

we found as much game as we wanted, for the Sioux didn't go much on elk when buffalo could be had in myriads on the plains farther east.

Before we left the hunting range of the Sioux, we had been warned by some of the old chiefs to look out for the Utes, for they had been very bold of late, and after the summer hunt was over, they, the Sioux chiefs, meant to go in and weed out a hundred or two to teach them stay-at-home manners.

Old Rachot, as usual, laughed at all warnings. He always was a reckless chap, and his half-breed son feared nothing, human, inhuman, or Divine. But we got a big scare, and came terribly near losing our hair; and this was the way it came about:

One night, after a lively day's hunt, we camped in a beautiful little cañon, with good water, plenty of wood, and a nice range for our horses. We hadn't seen an Indian sign for three days, and felt as safe, aye, safer, than we would have felt in Washington, within call of the Great Father's voice.

The horses were all turned out together. We usually picketed our hunters close to camp, but did not think it necessary there, for we were yet two day's ride inside of the Sioux lines, and in a spot where our little camp fire was all shut in out of sight. We made a hearty supper from trout roasted in the ashes, and broiled elk steak; told stories for an hour or two, and then rolled up in our blankets and went to sleep.

The morning star was up when the touch of old Rachot's hand woke me.

"Don't move, but get your hand on your arms!" he said, in a whisper. "Our horses are gone, and they'll look for our hair next!"

I was never wider awake in one second than I was then.

"Creep and follow the boy—I will follow you!" was the next whisper of Rachot, when he saw me draw my rifle up close to my side. My two six-shooters were already in my belt.

I saw the boy creeping away from our sleeping place toward a ledge of sandstone on our left. I had noticed the night before that it was full of ledges and holes. I crept after him, carrying only my arms and ammunition.

Old Rachot came after us, but he made a long delay, which I couldn't account for just then, but I soon did. As he came away he laid a brand or two together on our camp fire, and a light, flickering blaze showed where we had been sleeping, and the cunning old trapper had so arranged our blankets that it looked exactly as if men slept under them yet.

Then he crept on and joined me in the hole or small cave, where his son also lay.

"They've gone to put our horses with theirs, and to secure them all. Then they'll be back here. There aren't more than a dozen in the gang—but they want our hair!" he whispered.

"What are they?" I asked.

"Utes," was his reply; then he put his fingers to his lips and cocked his gun.

He was great on muzzle-loaders, and carried a double-barreled howitzer, I used to call it, for it was a smooth-bore, which he generally loaded with an ounce ball and a handful of number one buckshot. I knew it was so loaded then.

A moment after our guns were cocked we heard a slight noise out near our camp fire. It was only the rolling of a pebble down the bank of the little creek, but it kept even the reds that made it still for at least ten minutes. And ten such minutes make an hour, if I know myself, and I believe I do.

Then hearing nothing, the Utes who were creeping for our camp fire moved up from under the bank where they had been lying low since the pebble broke loose.

They were right between us and the camp fire, and we counted thirteen heads as they carefully rose over the bank, creeping for our blankets. They were within ten or fifteen feet of them, and within good pistol range of us, when Rachot, squinting over the barrels of his gun, whispered:

"Let them have it as I fire, and then go in with knife and pistol. Not one must get away, or we'll lose our horses!"

The next instant his terrible charge from both barrels went into the gang, as they were bending their bows to do their work at our camp fire.

The boy and myself poured in our fire, and the next instant we were on the run after two reds, all that were left from the ball and buckshot of Old Rachot's "howitzer" and our rifles.

They made a half-dozen jumps and then stopped. They had more lead than they could carry.

Finishing a couple who kicked yet, we went for our horses.

We found them hobbled a couple of rifle shots away, and with them thirteen more good ponies.

We had been out long enough. We knew that the Utes we had taken care of were more likely only a scout from a large war party, and we did not want to make their acquaintance.

We got back to Cache Creek, and didn't hunt any more elk in the Black Hills that season. We didn't think it would be healthy to do it.

## QUICKER THAN LIGHTNING.

"As quick as lightning" is a phrase colloquially used to express the maximum of rapidity. But, according to a well-known scientist, electricity itself is outstripped by that old-fashioned machine, the human body, by which it appears powers can, so to speak, be generated in the brain, transmitted through the nerves, and developed in the muscles in an infinitesimal fraction of a second.

It is stated that a pianist, in playing a presto of Mendelssohn, played 5,595 notes in four minutes and three seconds. The striking of each of these, it has been estimated, involved two movements of the finger, and possibly more.

Again the movements of the wrists, elbows, and arms can scarcely be less than one movement for each note. As twenty-four notes were played each second, and each involves three movements, we would have seventy-two voluntary movements per second.

Again, the place, the force, the time, the duration of each of these movements were controlled. All these motor reactions were conditioned upon a knowledge of the position of each finger of each hand, before it was moved, while moving it, as well as of the auditory effect to force and pitch, all of which involves equally rapid sensory transmissions.

If we add to this the work of the memory in placing the notes in their proper position, as well as the fact that the performer at the same time participates in the emotion the selection describes, and feels the strength and weaknesses of the performance, we arrive at a truly bewildering network of impulses, coursing along at inconceivably rapid rates.

Such estimates show, too, that we are capable of doing many things at once. The mind is not a unit, but is composed of higher and lower centres, the available fund of attention being distributed among them.

## A CURIOUS FISH.

A venerable and remarkable trout died recently on Long Island. His dead body was found in a covered well only a few feet in depth. The tradition is that some thirty-two years ago this fish was placed in the well, and has lived there ever since. Its body was eleven inches in length, and very thin and emaciated, weighing only six ounces, or less than a two-year-old trout reared under less unfavorable circumstances. As with all trout which live in semidarkness, it was nearly black in color.

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